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ABSTRACT

The Early Childhood Development Program in Louisiana was established to improve the readiness of preschool-aged children, statewide. The target population included children who were eligible to enter kindergarten the following year, who were at high risk of not being sufficiently ready for the regular school program, and who had not been identified as eligible for special education services. The purpose of this evaluation of the 1986-87 program was to provide information to decision makers at the state level that would assist them in making judgments about the extent to which the intended goals for early childhood development in the public schools had been attained, and about potential modifications needed in the operation and administration of the program. The report presents data in four areas: (1) the strengths and weaknesses of the early childhood programs, (2) the characteristics of the early childhood programs, (3) the perceptions of program staff concerning the operation and impact of the early childhood programs, and (4) instructional methodologies that were being used in the programs and the extent to which these reflected the developmental philosophy inherent in early childhood education. Conclusions and recommendations are included. Two appendices include early childhood program legislation and evaluation instruments, respectively. (PCB)

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FINAL EVALUATION REPORT
1986-87 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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FINAL EVALUATION REPORT
1986-87 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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SUBMITTED TO

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FINAL EVALUATION REPORT
1986-87 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Louisiana's Early Childhood Development Program was established as a pilot effort in 1984 to improve the readiness of preschool-aged children. During the 1985 Legislative Session, Act 323 authorized annual funding of the program that has since grown to encompass 50 systems statewide. The target population for the program includes children who are eligible to enter kindergarten the following year, who are at high risk of being insufficiently ready for the regular school program, and who have not been identified as eligible for special education services.

In addition to individual project evaluations required by statute, the Bureau of Elementary Education requested that the Evaluation Section conduct an overall evaluation of the implementation and effectiveness of the 1986-87 program. This final report, along with the April 1987 interim report, were prepared in response to that request.

Results

One aspect of the final evaluation examined the self-reported strengths and weaknesses of local early childhood programs and the steps being taken to address those weaknesses. Among the most frequently reported strengths of both ongoing and new programs was that of the preparation afforded participants for subsequent entry into kindergarten and the regular school program. The use of the developmental approach to early childhood education was another often-cited strength. The parental involvement component was cited as a strength in a number of systems, but as a weakness in many others, particularly among the new programs. The major weakness reported by the majority of the state's early childhood programs was that of inadequate funding for being able to serve more of the high-risk four-year-old population. In response to this self-reported need, lobbying efforts are currently underway to secure additional funds. Parental involvement activities are being planned to strengthen the parental involvement component of the program.

Early childhood teachers across the state reported that at least 20 different commercially-developed instruments, along with a wide variety of processes were in use in the screening of potential program participants. Half of the teachers rated the screening instruments they were using as "very effective."

At least 15 different commercially-developed instructional programs and a wide variety of locally-designed programs were reported to be in use in early childhood classes. The majority were rated by the teachers as excellent. Responsibility for selection of instructional programs rested primarily with project directors, but the decision was shared with teachers

in over half of the participating systems. Teachers most often assessed student performance through the use of skills checklists and/or more formalized commerically-developed assessment instruments. Overall class size ranged from 12 to 25 students; 20 was the norm.

Program staff were generally well pleased with the operation and impact of the Early Childhood Program. Principals were very positive about the value of the program in preparing high-risk four-year-olds for kindergarten and the regular school program. They reported that former program graduates currently enrolled in kindergarten and first grade were generally on line with their peers who had not been diagnosed as being at high risk.

Teachers were also pleased with the program. The major charge they recommended was that of program expansion so that more students could be served.

In almost two-thirds of the systems, over half of the parents of participating students were actively involved in the program. Such involvement generally centered around class parties, field trips, and scheduled meetings. Both principals and teachers indicated that more parental involvement was needed.

Structured observations of programs in their second and third years of operation indicate specific weaknesses, particularly in the area of creative activities. Mean scores representative of 62 percent of the maximum possible total were reported in this area, whereas means between 67 and 70 percent of the maximum were observed in all other developmental areas examined. In at least nine of the 28 individual developmental program characteristics assessed, mean ratings markedly below the "good" level were found.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were reached as a result of this final evaluation of the 1986-87 Early Childhood Development Program:

- Louisiana's Early Childhood Development Program is "on target" in terms of its intended goal of preparing high-risk four-year-olds for the regular school program.
- The major weakness reported among local early childhood programs appears to be one of insufficient quantity, rather than of insufficient quality of services.
- The parental involvement component of the Early Childhood Program appears to be the "weak link" in many local programs.
- There appears to be a lack of uniformity in the manner in which potential program participants are screened for program entry.
- The wide variety of instructional programs currently in use across the state raises some questions as to the extent to which all are of

comparable appropriateness for serving the population of high-risk four-year-olds targeted by the program.

- Principals and early childhood teachers were very pleased with the operation and impact of the Early Childhood Program in addressing the needs of identified high-risk four-year-olds.

- Structured observations of ongoing early childhood programs indicate that Louisiana's major instructional deficiency is in the area of creative activities.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered as a result of this study, as well as all previous evaluation studies conducted by the Evaluation Section relative to the Early Childhood Program:

- Louisiana's Early Childhood Program, with its emphasis on the developmental approach and parental involvement, should be expanded in order to prepare all eligible high-risk four-year-olds for kindergarten and the regular school program.

- A strong committment to the Early Childhood Program should be sought from state and local policy makers so that the program can eventually become a permanent part of Louisiana's comprehensive educational program.

- Concurrent with the continuation of efforts directed toward securing additional state funds for the Early Childhood Program, alternative funding sources should also be explored. The present national trend of redirecting federal monies to early childhood education is one that is becoming increasingly popular as a means of providing developmentally appropriate instruction to high-risk children, and one that Louisiana educators should seriously consider.

- A concerted effort should be made to secure stronger parental committment to the program, both as a prerequisite to student participation and as an essential ingredient for facilitating the development of each child's full potential.

- A uniform procedure for the screening of potential program participants should be developed and implemented on a statewide basis to ensure that the most efficient and effective techniques are employed in this critical selection process.

- At the close of this third year of the program, a thorough review of the various instructional programs in use in early childhood classes across the state should be conducted and recommendations should be made concerning those that are most appropriate for meeting the needs of the high-risk four-year-olds targeted by the program.

- In terms of instructional techniques and methodologies, attention should be directed toward fostering the developmental approach to early childhood education, with particular attention being focused on

addressing those specific areas assessed to be weak in each of the local programs observed in the conduct of the evaluation.

- Longitudinal studies of former Early Childhood Program participants should be continued to assess the full impact of the program on their subsequent school performance of these children.

- A follow-up study of the classroom observation phase of this evaluation should be conducted to assess the impact of local efforts directed toward addressing the weaknesses identified in their respective programs.

Janella Rachal
Evaluation Section
July 1987

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Louisiana's Early Childhood Development Program was established as a pilot effort in 1984 to improve the readiness of preschool-aged children. From that initial year in which 10 local school systems participated, the 1986-87 program has come to encompass 50 systems, with 71 individual early childhood classes being offered. Progam funding for FY87 was in the amount of $1.8 million (after budget reductions).

The target population for the program includes children who are eligible to enter kindergarten the following year, who are at high risk of being insufficiently ready for the regular school program, and who have not been identified as eligible for special education services. In order to receive program funds, systems were required to submit project proposals based on Department of Education guidelines encompassing and extending the mandates stipulated in Act 323 (R.S. 17:24.7). A copy of this legislation is included as Appendix A of this report.

Among the various requirements related to implementation of the early childhood development projects, Act 323 directs each participating school system to provide the Department of Education with a "thorough written review of the project including documentation of how the money awarded... was spent, its results, and the recommendations of the school system with regard to the project...". In addition to these individual project evaluations required by statute, the Department's Evaluation Section was asked by the Bureau of Elementary Education to continue its overall evaluation of the implementation and effectiveness of the Early Childhood Program, with emphasis on the 1986-87 component. An interim evaluation

report was developed in April 1987 addressing program characteristics and costs, as well as the longitudinal impact of the program on former participants. The present document represents the final evaluation of the 1986-87 program and is to be reviewed in tandem with the interim report.

Purpose of the Evaluation

The Evaluation Section, Office of Research and Development, has conducted the state level evaluation of the Early Childhood Development Program since the inception of that program in 1984-85. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide information to decision makers at the state level that will assist them in making judgments about the extent to which the intended goals for early childhood development in the public schools have been attained, and about potential modifications needed relative to the operation and administration of the program. The evaluation also supplements local project evaluations, thus providing the administrators of individual projects with information for use in their own decision making about continuing, modifying, or developing new early childhood development projects.

Evaluation Questions

This final evaluation of the 1986-87 Early Childhood Development Program focuses primarily on the ongoing second and third year projects, but also provides some descriptive information relative to the first year projects in terms of their general characteristics and implementation strategies. The ongoing projects that were begun in 1984-85 and 1985-86 were examined in considerable detail relative to their curricula and the specific instructional techniques being used to implement those curricula.

The questions addressed in this final evaluation of the 1986-87 Early Childhood Development Program include the following:

1. What were the self-reported strengths and weaknesses of the 1986-87 early childhood programs; what steps were being taken to address the identified weaknesses?

2. What were the characteristics of the 1986-87 early childhood programs?

3. What were the perceptions of program staff concerning the operation and impact of the early childhood programs?

4. What instructional techniques and methodologies were observed to be in use in ongoing early childhood programs; to what extent do these reflect the developmental philosophy inherent in early childhood education?

Evaluation Audiences

The following are the major audiences for the evaluation and are considered legitimate recipients of evaluation reports:

- The State Superintendent of Education and his Cabinet
- The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Members of the Legislature's Joint Education Committee
- The State Department of Education Bureau of Elementary Education
- Administrators of individual early childhood development projects

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REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Background

The first few years of life represent a unique period in human development; it is during this time that learning begins. Much research evidence indicates that the opportunities afforded children during these early childhood years are critical in shaping their learning experience.

Traditionally the home has served as the first classroom within which learning occurs. However, recent economic and social trends have led to an increase in the incidence of early learning taking place in settings outside of the home. The changing nature of the American family, coupled with the growing awareness of the importance of learning and development during the preschool years, have provided the impetus for this increase. The result of this shift has been that the number of children enrolled in early childhood programs is greater today than ever before.

Over the last 30 years most of the funding for early childhood programs has been provided by the federal government. The majority of these programs have been directed toward children from low-income families. Such programs as Head Start and subsidized child care have provided services to large numbers of prekindergarten-aged children. Compensatory education has been delivered by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, now Chapter I of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981. Historically, priority in the Chapter I program has been given to children enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12; consequently, in the past, little Chapter I money has usually been available for serving very young children.

However, the current trend appears to be moving toward serving identified high-risk children at an earlier age.

Recent research in early childhood education has provided cost-benefit information relative to the merits of investing in such programs for young children at risk of scholastic failure. The study of the Perry Preschool Project measuring the effects of the Ypsilanti, Michigan, prekindergarten program on youths through age 19 years, indicates that the initial investments made by the systems involved in the program were recovered by the time the participants graduated from high school. (In that project, the per pupil cost was approximately $5,000.) The results suggest that state and local governments stand to profit most from such investments because they eventually bear the largest burden of paying for programs addressing juvenile delinquency, teenage pregnancy, and welfare assistance.

A recent report prepared by the National Association for the Education of Young Children indicates that, during the 1985-86 school year, state education agencies in 15 states and the District of Columbia funded, or were developing plans for funding, prekindergarten programs for 4-year-olds in the public schools. Other than New York, California, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, state education agencies have not funded prekindergarten programs (except for handicapped children) until relatively recently. Since 1980, however, Maryland, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Florida, and Maine, along with Louisiana, have initiated state-funded prekindergarten programs. New programs were begun during the 1985-86 school year in Texas, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, and Massachusetts. A number of other states, including Connecticut, North Carolina, and Minnesota, are currently developing initiatives for early childhood programs. Funding legislation for comparable programs is pending in a number of other states.

Essential Components of an Early Childhood Education Program

Research in early childhood education concludes that quality in preschool programs is essential if such programs are to have long-term benefits. As defined by Schweinhart, Berrueta-Clement, Barnett, Epstein, and Weikart, quality in early childhood programs necessitates parental involvement, programmatic leadership by supervisors and directors, competent and genuinely enthusiastic teachers, an articulated curriculum of proven effectiveness, a sound inservice training program, and specific feedback provided by program evaluation. In a quality early childhood program children are taught two things: how to be good learners and how to work with adults who are not members of their own families.

While most early childhood programs do focus on the attainment of these two goals, considerable variety generally exists among individual programs in the manner in which these goals are addressed. However, there is a growing body of research evidence that suggests that the character of the learning provided in early childhood programs may be the most crucial factor in determining the impact of such programs on the children served. There is no real value in having a young child leave home for a few hours a day to be with an adult (other than a parent) and a group of children unless the program in which the child participates is carefully designed and implemented in such a way as to meet his/her specific needs. We know that young children do not learn in the same ways as older children and adults. Due to the newness of the environment into which they are placed, young children learn best through direct contact with the world around them, rather than through formal education with its heavy reliance on symbolic rules. This fact was noted in the writings of Froebel, Montessori, and

Piaget, and has been consistently upheld by current researchers in the area of child development.

According to Boegehold, Cuffaro, and Hooks of the Bank Street College of Education, the most effective early childhood education program is one that focuses on child-initiated activities. David Elkind agrees and advocates that early childhood education should encourage self-directed learning by providing an environment rich in materials to explore, manipulate, and talk about. Such a program establishes a setting and provides the appropriate materials and supportive personnel to facilitate the development of the whole child. It offers a unique atmosphere with free play at one end of the spectrum, and narrowly focused academics at the other. According to Elkind, nearly half of the reading problems found in students results "not from starting children too late, but from starting them too early." Speaking at the November 1986 conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Elkind indicated that the "force-feeding" of reading, writing, and arithmetic on preschool-aged children often undermines a child's self-confidence and can lead to learning problems in later grades. Samuel Sava, executive director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals, concurred in stating that such force-feeding at this early age frequently turns children off with respect to education, and it is often very difficult to turn them back on to learning. The teacher's role in an effective early childhood program is seen as that of a nurturing person who (1) views thinking and feeling as interactive processes; (2) is a resource person in support of the child as an explorer and experimenter; and (3) is a supplier of materials and an initiator of programs. Interaction among program participants (children,

teachers, and parents) is viewed as the most effective method of developing the desired social, affective, and cognitive learning.

Good early childhood programs incorporating these key components have helped children overcome some of the effects of poverty. Such programs have been shown to have a lasting impact on adult life. Though the number of such programs is still relatively small, the increasing number of states becoming involved in early childhood education represents a genuine effort to address the needs of the large number of children who could truly benefit from program participation.

3

METHODOLOGY

Data Sources

The final evaluation of the 1986-87 early childhood development project is largely descriptive and nonexperimental in nature. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected to address the evaluation questions previously cited. The specific data sources for the study are listed below. Copies of the evaluation instruments used in collection of the data for this report can be found in Appendix B.

- Project proposals
- Program guidelines
- Local project evaluation reports (1984-86)
- State level evaluation reports (1984-86)
- Louisiana Early Childhood Development Program Site Visit Data Collection Instrument
- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (Harms & Clifford)
- Project site visits

Evaluation Procedures

Activities associated with the final evaluation of the 1986-87 Early Childhood Development Program began in September 1986 with the development of the evaluation design and the corresponding data collection instruments by the Evaluation Section in conjunction with the Bureau of Elementary Education. During October 1986 training in the use of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (developed by Thelma Harms and Richard M. Clifford,

and modified for the specific requirements of this evaluation), was provided to staff from the Evaluation Section and the Bureau of Elementary Education by Dr. Betty Anderson of the Evaluation Section. Dr. Anderson had received training in the use of the instrument by Richard M. Clifford prior to her extensive use of the rating scale in her 18-month evaluation of Louisiana's Preschool Handicapped Program. Subsequent to the in-house training session, all of the participant raters visited the same designated early childhood program sites in order to acquire experience in the use of the instrument. After each classroom observation, the raters discussed their assessments of each item identified on the scale and began to work toward consensus in order to eventually develop interrater reliability in the use of the instrument. These practice observation sessions were conducted at three sites during late October and early November, and involved eight department personnel as raters.

Site visits to each school system participating in the Early Childhood Program were conducted during the November 1986 - April 1987 period. At each program location, the Site Visit Data Collection Instrument was completed by interviewing the project director, school principal, and local early childhood program teacher. For second and third year programs only, the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale was completed while on site. For those ongoing programs with more than one project, the scale was completed at only one school site. Follow-up letters were later forwarded to each project director identifying the strengths and weaknesses of their individual programs. The results of the site visits and the accompanying classroom observations are presented in Chapter 4 of this report.

Description of the Instruments

The Site Visit Data Collection Instrument was developed by the Evaluation Section, in conjunction with the Bureau of Elementary Education, as the basis upon which data relative to each program site could be collected. Specific portions of the instrument were designed to serve as interview protocols in discussions with project directors, principals, and teachers during the onsite visits. For ongoing projects, the previous year's evaluation results were discussed, with particular emphasis being directed toward the steps taken by local systems to address identified weaknesses.

School principals were asked to assess the impact of their local program on participating students, and to provide insights into the nature and level of parental response to the program. For second and third year projects, longitudinal program effects were sought relative to previous participants currently enrolled in kindergarten or first grade.

Teachers were interviewed concerning specific program characteristics, as well as student screening and assessment procedures. The types of parental involvement activities offered to participants were identified, and assessments were provided relative to the level of parental participation in such activities. Suggestions and recommendations from teachers concerning needed program modifications were also sought.

During the 1986-87 school year, classroom observations of ongoing early childhood programs were conducted by Bureau of Elementary Education and Evaluation Section personnel through the use of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale developed by Clifford and Harms (1980). This

instrument focused on the areas of Personal Care Routines (3 items), Furnishings and Display for Children (4 items), Language-Reasoning Experiences (4 items), Fine and Gross Motor Activities (5 items), Creative Activities (7 items), Social Development (4 items), and Adults (1 item).

For each of the 28 items, the observer was to assign a rating within the range of one to seven points. Benchmark characteristics were designated at the odd-numbered intervals with 1=inadequate, 3=minimal, 5=good, and 7=excellent. The assignment of any odd-numbered rating to a particular item meant that all criteria described relative to that specific rating were met, as well as those described relative to ratings below that selected value. For example, a rating of "5" assigned to a particular item meant that all criteria described relative to the ratings of "1" and "3" were met, as well as those associated with the "5" rating. Even-numbered ratings were also allowed; they represented the presence of all criteria described within the preceding odd-numbered ratings, as well as a portion, but not all, of the criteria contained in the succeeding odd-numbered category. Copies of both instruments are included as Appendix A of this report.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data compiled from the Site Visit Data Collection Instrument relative to each local project are largely descriptive in nature, and, as a result, are generally reported in that manner in this report. For those items where quantitative information was obtained, frequencies and means are reported, as appropriate.

The data collected through the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale are reported in the form of frequencies and percentages relative to each

item observed. State level mean scores, score ranges, modes, and standard deviations are also provided. Aggregate means, ranges, and standard deviations are also shown for each of the seven major categories identified within the scale.

4

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Introduction

The data collected in this final evaluation of the 1986-87 Early Childhood Development Program are organized with respect to the five major evaluation questions addressed in the study. The results are presented below:

Evaluation Question 1: What were the self-reported strengths and weaknesses of the 1986-87 early childhood programs; what steps are being taken to address identified weaknesses?

Background

Data collected in response to this question were obtained from the 1985-86 evaluation reports submitted for ongoing programs, as well as through onsite interviews with project directors, school principals, and early childhood teachers. The self-reported strengths and weaknesses of ongoing programs, along with the steps undertaken during the 1986-87 school year to address those weaknesses are identified by system in Table 1. Comparable information relative to new programs is presented in Table 2.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Ongoing Programs

As illustrated in Table 1, several key areas were repeatedly mentioned as strengths of second and third year early childhood programs. Among these were the success of the program in preparing students for kindergarten and

TABLE 1. SELF-REPORTED STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF ONGOING EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

SYSTEM	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	STEPS TO ADDRESS
1. Ascension (2nd)	o None cited	o None cited	o None cited
2. Avoyelles (2nd)	o Prepares for K o Parents supportive	o Initially used CAT for screening but too much time and too many people needed to administer	o Changed to Brigance this year
		o Program administration somewhat lacking	o Improved during second year
		o Evaluator observed that evaluation report not completely reflective of volume of skill level data at program site	o Suggestions offered concerning production of second year evaluation report
3. Bossier (3rd)	o Parent/teacher involvement phenomenal	o Not enough money	o Discussed with local board members and legislators
	o Early identification of student potential	o Not enough space	
4. Caddo (2nd)	o Coordination between central office and school staff	o Not enough opportunities to work with parents due to their own work responsibilities	
	o Positive attitude among parents	o Screening process needs constant monitoring to assess effectiveness	o Use initial screening process for introduction; use developmental skills profile to assess ongoing student progress
	o Coordination with special education		
	o Use of developmental approach	o Uncertainty of continued funding poses potential staffing problems for next year	o Funding should be provided as part of MFP
	o Teachers receptive to suggestions and new ideas		

SYSTEM	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	STEPS TO ADDRESS
5. Calcasieu (2nd)	o Teachers given new disposition about skills development among 4-year olds (from academic to developmental) o Emphasis on oral language; early intervention for speech o Closer relationship with parents o K teachers very positive; good fine and gross motor skills	o Commericial program too structured o Not enough contact with parents o Use of classroom aide needs to be strengthened o Insufficient equipment due to delayed shipments	o System developing own curriculum guide with more emphasis on developmental as opposed to academic aspects o Home visits and inservice activities scheduled o More emphasis and training on how to work with aide being conducted o Equipment being added
6. Caldwell (2nd)	o Language development o Self-help skills o Readiness for K o Personal achievement	o Not enough activities to develop gross motor skills o Area without carpeting needed o Not enough parental involvement	o Included in schedule; aide works with gross motor skills o Can use room next door since no space in classroom o Try to see often; many work
7. Cameron (2nd)	o Participants showed marked improvement over nonparticipants o Parental involvement o Program support from all levels o K program this year progressed faster because of children in preschool program	o Language posttest results defined one percentile point from pretest, but program may not have been followed closely in language and perhaps not much room for growth	o Language component of curriculum being emphasized

SYSTEM	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	STEPS TO ADDRESS
8. Catahoula (2nd)	o Provides children with strong base for school o 72% moved from below mean to above mean o 61% moved from below average to above average range	o None cited	o None cited
9. Concordia (2nd)	o Served children who, otherwise, would not have been served o Strong teacher o Social development o Parental involvement	o None cited	o None cited
10. East Baton Rouge (3rd)	o Inservice training for teachers o Developmental techniques used by teachers	o No funds available for aides o Moving existing program to new site	o Funding made available at state level o Planning pre-registration before end of school so that sites can remain the same
11. Franklin (2nd)	o Growth in fine motor, cognitive, and language areas	o Gross motor improvement not as much as others o Not enough parental involvement	o Physical education equipment and scheduled session for gross motor o Parents had to agree to attend all parent conferences; they come in to pick up progress reports
12. Grant (2nd)	o None cited	o Ratio of 20:1 excessive; 15:1 more appropriate	o None cited

SYSTEM	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	STEPS TO ADDRESS
13. Iberville (2nd)	o Strong school and community support o Excellent instructor o Inservice meetings along with parent meetings o Coordination of K and early childhood teachers	o Too much structure in program o Couldn't serve all who needed o Not enough materials and supplies o Not keeping enough records to have better evaluation	o Tried to remove some of the structure o Collecting more information for evaluation report
14. Jefferson (2nd)	o None cited	o None cited	o None cited
15. Lafayette (3rd)	o Parent component o Developmental approach o Growth in language and social development greatly improved	o Schedule not followed as closely as should have been o More follow-up work needs to be done subsequent to the teacher's presentation	o Provided two days of inservice on how to follow schedule and types of activities to be used
16. Lincoln (2nd)	o Children doing very well are either where supposed to be or are ahead o Language, writing, fine and gross motor, cognitive matching, naming objects, and self-help	o Not enough emphasis on counting skills	o Felt best not to emphasize because of importance of the maturity of the children
17. Monroe (2nd)	o Instructional program o Student gains	o First year was hardest in terms of organization	o More organization by all working in program
18. Orleans (2nd)	o None cited	o None cited	o None cited

SYSTEM	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	STEPS TO ADDRESS
19. Ouachita (2nd)	o Gains in language development o Gains in self-concept o Scope and sequence of curriculum	o None cited	o None cited
20. Pointe Coupee (2nd)	o Parental involvement o Full-time aides o Field trips o Instructional program o Consultant services received o Exposed children to structure and routine	o Classroom too crowded o Lack of outdoor activities o Only one snack time could be scheduled	o Provided teacher with large classroom o More outdoor time provided o Could not add another snack time due to scheduling
21. Rapides (2nd)	o None cited	o None cited	o None cited
22. Red River (2nd)	o Student attitude and social development o Parental involvement and support o Home visitation component	o Facilities	o Tried to enhance classroom environment o Property tax election for new physical plants failed
23. Richland (3rd)	o Exceptional teacher certified in early childhood o A well-planned curriculum was developed	o None cited	o Continue searching for methods and techniques proved successful with high-risk children o Develop a management system for maintaining records of skills and concepts mastered

SYSTEM	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	STEPS TO ADDRESS
24. St. Helena (2nd)	o 90% mastery of skills o 70-95% parental involvement o Attendance	o None cited	o None cited
25. St. James (2nd)	o Increased proficiency in language development, socialization, math, and motor skills o Parental involvement	o None cited	o None cited
26. St. John (2nd)	o Improvement in social, emotional, intellectual, fine motor, and gross motor skills o Improvement in ability to think, reason, and speak clearly	o None cited	o None cited
27. St. Landry (2nd)	o Development of communication, socialization, daily living, motor, and vocabulary skills	o Teacher hired late and so did not get thorough inservice training o Late start-up	o Teacher visited other programs for ideas and took early childhood course in summer school o This year started program on time with needed materials and supplies
28. St. Martin (2nd)	o Children will be ready for K o 85% of children are on level in language, math, gross motor, fine motor, and personal skills	o None cited	o None cited

SYSTEM	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	STEPS TO ADDRESS
28. St. Martin (Continued)	o 80% of parents participated in rating the projects, had knowledge of pupil growth and development, and attended parent/teacher conferences		
29. St. Mary (3rd)	o Language development, readiness skills, and concept development o Preparation for K routine is a big plus	o Unable to serve more children o Funds for field trips and outside activities lacking	o Submitted 8(g) proposal to expand program to offer to all eligible 4-year olds in parish
30. St. Tammany (2nd)	o Language development o Creation of positive self-image or self-concept o Parent workshops/training twice a month	o Need to develop a way to measure social and emotional behavior, as well as nutrition, health, and safety awareness	o Involve local evaluator in the process at an earlier date
31. Tensas (2nd)	o Language development o Improved self-image o Children learn a routine and gain independence	o Lack of parental involvement	o Started PACT - a parent program where parents work with teacher and attend meetings to get ideas for working with children at home
32. Vermilion (2nd)	o None cited	o None cited	o None cited
33. Vernon (3rd)	o All objectives from 86-87 program were met	o Not enough attention to record keeping and to carrying out evaluation design and procedures	o Better record keeping system o Time to update and file records

SYSTEM	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	STEPS TO ADDRESS
34. Webster (3rd)	o Parental involvement o Provides academic and social readiness o Effective community relations through program	o Unable to serve enough children who need program	o Consideration being given to providing two one-half day classes in order to serve more children
35. West Carroll (2nd)	o High achievement levels noted in language, cognitive, and motor development o Parental support and involvement	o None cited	o None cited
36. West Feliciana (2nd)	o Oral language development o Getting into a routine o Social aspect of being with other children and away from home	o Documentation and utilization of all student information--screening results, testing, etc.	o Increased awareness o Structured meetings with all persons involved
37. Winn (3rd)	o Ample materials o Availability of aide o Individual attention in development of gross motor skills	o None cited	o None cited

the regular school program, and the specific parental involvement components of many of the local programs. The use of the developmental approach in early childhood education was cited as a strength by many systems, particularly with respect to its strong emphasis on language development.

One of the most frequently cited weaknesses among ongoing programs was the lack of available funds for program expansion. The need to serve many more high-risk four-year-olds was of widespread concern. Though cited as a strength in many systems, the parental involvement component was often identified as a weakness in others. In some instances project directors felt that the program facilities were inadequate and that steps were needed to make the classrooms and playground areas more suitable for four-year-olds. In a few systems, directors indicated that the instructional programs being used in their early childhood classes were too structured. The uncertainty of continued program funding and the late date at which notification of such funding was received was cited as a weakness in a few systems.

In most instances, project directors indicated that steps were being taken to address identified weaknesses. With respect to the reported funding inadequacies, lobbying efforts were underway to secure additional monies for program expansion. Additional parental involvement activities were being planned to increase parent participation, and steps were being taken to enhance program facilities where such inadequacies were cited.

Strengths and Weaknesses of New Programs

Many of the strengths and weaknesses previously identified among ongoing programs were also cited relative to new programs. As illustrated in Table 2, preparation for kindergarten and the regular school program was

TABLE 2. SELF-REPORTED STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF NEW EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

SYSTEM	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	STEPS TO ADDRESS
1. Bienville	o Serving all children who applied for program	o Could provide services for more at-risk children	o Money being requested; Board members aware of program
	o Preparing for K	o Better designed curriculum needed	
2. Bossier (1 program)	o Offers advantages not available at home	o More children need to be served	o Central office personnel have been made aware of situation
	o Observed tremendous changes in the children		
3. East Carroll	o Social development; learning to function in an organized setting	o Program limited; needs to be expanded	o Funding constraints hinder expansion
4. East Feliciana	o Provides educational and social experiences that these children would not have been exposed to otherwise	o None cited	o None cited
5. Evangeline	o Just existence of program	o Lack of funds for materials, equipment, supplies	o Looking at other funding sources for program implementation and expansion
	o School and principal most supportive and positive	o Limited to one site	
	o Curriculum appropriate	o Due to late start up, staff selection limited	

SYSTEM	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	STEPS TO ADDRESS
6. LaSalle	o Experienced teacher and aide o Language development o Prepares for K next year	o Uncertainty of funding; have to start too late	o Request that legislature makes funding decision earlier
7. Madison	o Children are learning o Children enjoy program o Prepared for K o Parents happy with program	o Parental involvement (Principal thought good, but teacher and supervisor felt needed more)	o Attempt to increase the level of parental involvement
8. Natchitoches	o Being able to truly identify 20 high-risk students and provide them with the appropriate environment to give them a good start o Good personnel	o None cited	o None cited
9. Plaquemines	o Regular attendance o Provides opportunities for children to adjust to school setting o Develops socialization skills o Instructional program working well with these children	o Would like involvement of early childhood education majors o Would like to expand program	o If refunded, will seek certified early childhood teacher

SYSTEM	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	STEPS TO ADDRESS
10. Sabine	o Listening skills development o Routine of school	o Inadequate funding for supplies and playground equipment for motor activities	o Teacher made some of the necessary materials o Secured playground area
11. St. Bernard	o Language development o Emphasis on socialization skills o Developmental philosophy of program	o Too many children in class with no aide available	o None cited
12. St. Charles	o Giving children opportunity to be in school	o Lateness of notification of funding o Problems securing teacher	o Will continue to be problem until early childhood program becomes part of state's overall educational program
13. Tangipahoa	o Growth in social behavior and cognitive development o Preparation for K o Teacher is key to program success	o Late start-up o Inadequate funds for field trips	o None cited
14. Terrebonne	o Just having program in the community	o Parental involvement--many work and have no transportation to attend meetings	o Planned week of activities for parents at school

a frequently mentioned strength, as was the developmental approach with its emphasis on language development. Of note, however, was the infrequent mention, among new programs, of the parental involvement component that was an often-cited strength among second and third year programs.

Weaknesses of new programs centered around the lack of funds to serve all eligible at-risk four-year-olds. The uncertainty of initial funding and the problems inherent in the subsequent late program start-up were also mentioned. In some instances, the parental involvement component was specifically identified as a program weakness.

In addressing their identified funding deficiency, project directors indicated that steps were being taken to inform policy makers of the need for additional funds for program expansion and that alternative funding sources were being explored. Activities to enhance parental involvement were also being developed.

Discussion

Overall, the major strengths cited among both ongoing and new programs (preparation for kindergarten, parental involvement, and the use of the developmental approach) are the very ingredients of which early childhood programs are made. Research in this area has repeatedly shown that the use of the developmental approach to facilitate individual skills development, along with the committed involvement of parents, are the keys to preparing high-risk four-year-olds for the regular school program.

The often-cited weakness of inadequate program funding is actually not a program weakness, but instead, a reality in a state plagued with spending deficits. The current grass-roots-initiated lobbying efforts directed toward securing additional funding underscore the committment of local

educators and parents to the philosophy and the eventual rewards inherent in early childhood education.

Evaluation Question 2: What were the characteristics of the 1986-87 early childhood programs?

Background

As part of the onsite visits of the early childhood programs by staff from the Bureau of Elementary Education, teachers were interviewed concerning various aspects of their local programs. In those interviews, questions were directed toward the types and effectiveness of the various screening instruments used to identify high-risk four-year-olds to be considered for program participation. Similar questions were asked concerning the nature of the instructional programs employed. Assessment instruments and techniques were explored and the adequacy of the pupil/teacher ratio in each class was examined. The results of the teacher interviews are presented below.

Early Childhood Program Screening Instruments

In the conduct of the early childhood program onsite visits, 65 teachers were interviewed concerning their perceptions of the effectiveness of the various screening instruments for the identification of potential program participants. Among the 20 different commercially developed tests presently in use for screening purposes, 10 were cited by three or more teachers. Those instruments, along with effectiveness ratings assessed by the teachers using each are shown in Table 3.

As illustrated, Gesell and Brigance were the instruments most often used by the 65 teachers interviewed (by 10 each, or 15 percent). Gesell was

TABLE 3. TEACHER ASSESSMENTS OF THE SCREENING INSTRUMENTS IN USE FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

N = 65

	Instrument	Number and Percentage Using Each[a]		Effectiveness Ratings									
				Very Effective		Effective		Ineffective		Very Ineffective		No Response	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I.	Gesell	10	15%	3	30%	6	60%	0	0%	0	0%	1	10%
II.	Brigance	10	15%	8	80%	1	10%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%
III.	Learning Accomplishment Profile	5	8%	1	20%	1	20%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
IV.	Dial R	5	8%	2	40%	3	60%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
V.	Denver Developmental Screening Test	5	8%	2	40%	3	60%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VI.	Cooperative Preschool	4	6%	1	25%	3	75%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
VII.	Santa Clara	4	6%	2	50%	1	25%	0	0%	0	0%	1	25%
VIII.	Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test	3	5%	2	67%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
IX.	Battelle	3	5%	2	67%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
X.	Vineland Social Maturity	3	5%	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

[a] In several instances teachers reported using more than one instrument for screening purposes.

rated as very effective by three of the 10 teachers (30%), and as effective by six (60%). One did not provide a rating. Brigance was rated as very effective by eight (80%), effective by one (10%), and ineffective by one (10%). Learning Accomplishment Profile, Dial R, and the Denver Developmental Screening Test were next in relative frequency of use; each was used by five teachers (8%). Ratings of very effective were awarded by 20 percent, 40 percent, and 40 percent of the teachers with respect to the three instruments, in that order. Similar data relative to the other five most frequently administered screening instruments can be obtained from the table and interpreted similarly.

When asked how the results of the screening process were used, early childhood teachers indicated that the information was most often used for its intended purpose: to identify potential program participants. The overwhelming majority said that the data were further used to identify individual strengths and weaknesses, and, as such, provided the basis for instructional planning designed to meet the unique needs of each child.

Early Childhood Instructional Programs

Information collected relative to the instructional programs in use in early childhood classes is presented in Table 4. Among the 65 teachers interviewed during the onsite visits, four commercially-developed instructional programs, along with a variety of locally-developed programs, were most frequently cited.

Among the four commercially-developed programs, the Peabody Language Development Kit was found to be in use by 32 classroom teachers (49%). Among those 32 teachers, 22 (69%) rated the program as excellent and 10 (31%) as adequate. Next in relative frequency of use was the Britannica

TABLE 4. TEACHER ASSESSMENTS OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS IN USE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSES
N = 65

	Program	Number and Percentage Using Each[a]		Effectiveness Ratings							
				Excellent		Adequate		Poor		No Response	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I.	Peabody Language Development Kit	32	49%	22	69%	10	31%	0	0%	0	0%
II.	Britannica Early Childhood Program	10	15%	10	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
III.	Chapel Hill Outreach Material	6	9%	2	33%	3	50%	0	0%	1	17%
IV.	Beginning Milestones Program	3	5%	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
V.	Locally Developed Programs	19	29%	15	80%	3	16%	0	0%	1	5%

[a] In many instances teachers reported using more than one instructional program in their classes.

Early Childhood Program (by 10 teachers, or 15 percent). All 10 rated the program as excellent. The Chapel Hill Outreach Material was used by six teachers (9%), with two (33%) rating the program as excellent, three (50%) as adequate, and one (17%) providing no response. The Beginning Milestones Program was used by three teachers (5%); all three rated the program as excellent.

Twenty-nine percent of the teachers interviewed (19 teachers) used various locally-developed programs. Such programs received excellent ratings from 15 of those teachers (80%), adequate ratings from three (16%), and a rating of no response from one (5%).

With respect to both the commercially and locally-developed instructional programs currently in use, teachers were asked to explain how such programs were selected/developed for implementation in their respective systems. In the case of commercially-prepared programs, central office project directors played the major role in determining which would be used in their systems' early childhood classes. Although some variations in the degree of teacher input into that decision were noted, over half of the teachers reported that the decision was generally shared between themselves and their project directors. Relative to the locally-developed instructional programs, teacher input into the development and modification of such programs was generally found to be considerable.

Assessment of Student Performance

As part of the onsite interviews, teachers were asked to explain their assessment procedures in terms of how they evaluated student performance, how often, and with what instrument(s). In responding to this question, the majority indicated that they used skills checklists of various types, many

of which had been commercially designed to serve as integral components of their purchased instructional programs. In a number of instances, however, the checklists had been locally developed. Most of the checklists relied heavily on informal observations of student performance on a daily basis.

In those cases where formalized assessments were conducted, such testing generally occurred twice a year, at the beginning and end of the school year. Additional assessment procedures reported were informal assessments of progress, parent/teacher conferences directed toward student performance, follow-ups on the screening instrument data, and the use of videotaping to visually document student progress. Various timeframes accompanied the use of these various techniques.

Student-Teacher Ratio

Data concerning current student-teacher ratios and the perceptions of early childhood teachers concerning those ratios are presented in Table 5. Overall class sizes ranged from a minimum of 12 students to a maximum of 25. The most frequently reported ratio was that of 20:1 as reported by 25 of the 61 teachers interviewed (41%). Among those 25 teachers, 21 (84%) indicated that 20:1 was an appropriate ratio, whereas the other four (16%) felt that fewer students per class would be preferential. Six of the 61 teachers (10%) had 12 students in their respective classes; all six (100%) were pleased with that class size. The remaining class size and appropriateness rating data provided by teachers are also illustrated.

Discussion

Overall, data collected from teachers relative to the characteristics of their early childhood programs indicate that a variety of

Table 5. Early Childhood Program Student-Teacher Ratios
N = 61

Ratio	Number of Classes N	%	Reported Adequate N	%	Reported Inadequate N	%
12:1	6	10%	6	100%	0	0%
13:1	1	2%	1	100%	0	0%
15:1	12	20%	11	92%	1	8%
16:1	1	2%	1	100%	0	0%
17:1	4	7%	3	75%	1	25%
18:1	2	3%	2	100%	0	0%
19:1	1	2%	1	100%	0	0%
20:1	25	41%	21	84%	4	16%
21:1	3	5%	3	100%	0	0%
22:1	2	3%	2	100%	0	0%
24:1	1	2%	1	100%	0	0%
25:1	3	5%	2	67%	1	33%

commercially-developed screening instruments are in use for the identification of potential program participants. However, analyses of the effectiveness ratings accorded to these varied instruments reveals that only half of the teachers interviewed actually gave these instruments ratings of "very effective." The considerable diversity in the screening instruments presently in use for identifying eligible students, coupled with the range of assessment ratings given to many of these instruments would appear to indicate that the entire screening process is perhaps in need of examination prior to the beginning of the 1988-89 program. As reported by teachers, the results of the screening were generally being used for determining eligibility and for planning instruction.

Commercially-developed instructional programs were more than twice as likely to be in use than those developed locally. However, among both types, ratings of "excellent" were most often reported. The selection of such programs was most often the responsibility of central office staff, with considerable teacher input being noted among more than half of the teachers.

Student performance was most often evaluated through skills checklists and commercially-developed assessment instruments. The checklists were generally used on a daily basis, whereas the more formal assessments were conducted twice a year, at the beginning and end of the school year.

Reported class sizes ranged from 12 to 25 students per class. A student-teacher ratio of 20:1 was most often reported, with most teachers rating this ratio as appropriate.

Evaluation Question 3: What were the perceptions of program staff concerning the operation and impact of the early childhood program?

Principals' Perceptions

Onsite interviews of principals of schools housing early childhood programs focused on the perceptions of these principals on the impact of the program on participants, as well as on their views concerning parental response to the program. In terms of program impact, principals were overwhelmingly positive concerning the value of the Early Childhood Program in providing high-risk four-year-olds with the skills necessary for kindergarten and the regular school program. As reported by principals, program participants made real gains in such areas as independence, self-confidence, self-control, socialization, language development, communication, and motor skills development.

Typical comments made by principals concerning their views of the local early childhood programs operating in their schools included the following:

- "Absenteeism in the pre-k class may be two percent; they must like what they are doing."
- "The program has enabled many students who otherwise would have had extreme difficulty, to have a successful kindergarten experience."
- "Some of these children have done as well or better than children in the regular kindergarten program."
- "Kindergarten teachers report a great deal of difference between the students who participated in the program and those who did not."
- "The program has provided an opportunity for these children to catch up prior to entry into school; they have developed confidence in themselves."
- "These students like school, want to come, and know the routine of school."
- "The children have learned about responsibility and about getting along with others."
- "For these children, the break from home and the routine of school have already been established when they enter kindergarten."

- "Language development is probably the strongest part of this program."

In those schools where the program has been in place for two or three years, principals were further asked about their observations concerning the performance of previous program participants currently in kindergarten and first grade. Among the comments received relative to kindergarten performance were the following:

- "Most of the former program participants are performing at kindergarten level and are keeping up with other kindergarten students who were not tested as being at high risk."
- "The kindergarten teachers feel that the children who were in the preschool class are further along than their peers in the area of listening, in particular. The former program participants were able to do activities in September that previous classes could not do until December."
- "The students are doing very well; it was noticeable to teachers that these children had attended preschool."
- "The former program participants are doing great; they are now performing on grade level. Our school is operating a tutorial program for kindergarten and first grade, and of the 20 currently enrolled, only one student is from the preschool program."

Among those former early childhood program participants currently in first grade, principals' comments relative to their performance included the following:

- "The students have adjusted and are on-level in their classwork."
- "First grade teachers reported that these students are continuing to achieve."
- "The former preschool students are on grade level."
- "The children who were in the early childhood program have not had to be retained."
- "These students have maintained their on-line status."

The final question asked of principals focused on their observations of parental response to the early childhood program. As expressed by these principals, the parents of program participants were overwhelmingly

supportive of, and very pleased with, the early childhood program. Many of the principals cited specific activities for parents such as workshops, meetings, and classroom volunteer programs. In some instances, however, principals noted that more parental involvement would have been desirable.

Typical comments made by principals concerning parental response to the program included the following:

- "Parents are actively involved in the program; close to 100 percent take part."
- "Parents were apprehensive at first about sending the little ones, but now they are very positive and supportive."
- "Parents came initially, but at this point parental involvement is not as good as I would like for it to be."
- "Parents wait in line to get their children into the program."
- "Parents are enthusiastic and cooperative; we have a volunteer program through which parents serve on committees and assist with various classroom activities."
- "Parental involvement was excellent at the beginning of the year, but it has not been good since then."
- "Parents really seem to be interested in the program; the student attendance records indicate how the parents value the program."
- "Parents are very enthusiastic; we had so many students apply that it was difficult to turn some away."
- "Parents have responded beautifully; they not only attend scheduled meetings, but they feel free to come to school any time."

Teachers' Perceptions

Early childhood teachers were asked to identify those types of activities specifically designed for the involvement of the parents of program participants. The specific activities mentioned, along with the number and percentage of teachers employing each are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Early Childhood Program Parental Involvement Activities
N = 65

Type of Activity	Frequency of Availability N	%
• Assistance with special activities (e.g., parties, field trips)	60	92%
• Attendance at scheduled meetings/workshops/conferences	55	85%
• Working with their children on assigned home activities	43	66%
• Working as classroom volunteers (e.g., to read stories, prepare materials, assist individual children)	38	58%
• Participation in home visits	14	22%
• Furnishing of snacks or needed classroom materials	6	9%

As illustrated in the table, the type of activity most frequently available for parental involvement is that of providing assistance with special class activities such as parties and field trips. These types of activities were reported among 60 of the 65 teachers interviewed (92%). Next in relative frequency was the scheduling of meetings, workshops, and conferences for parents (by 55 teachers, or 85 percent). Parents were asked to work with their children on assigned home activities by 43 teachers (66%). Thirty-eight teachers (58%) provided classroom volunteer programs for parents in which parents were asked to undertake such duties as the reading of stories and the preparation of materials. Home visits were scheduled by 14 teachers (22%), and in six classrooms (9%), parents were asked to provide snacks and assorted classroom materials.

The level of parent participation in such scheduled activities is illustrated in Table 7. Four categories of participation levels are shown, along with the relative frequency of participation in each as reported by the 65 early childhood teachers interviewed.

As shown in the table, nine teachers (14%) reported that 25 percent or fewer of the parents of their early childhood students were involved in the program. Between 26 and 50 percent of the parents were reported to be involved by 12 (18%) of the teachers. Eighteen teachers (28%) indicated that between 51 and 75 percent of their program parents participated, and 22 teachers (34%) reported such involvement among 76 to 100 percent. Four teachers did not provide data relative to this question.

When asked whether they were satisfied with the level of parental involvement in their respective programs, 46 of the 65 teachers (71%) said "yes," and 18 (28%) said "no." One did not respond.

Table 7. Level of Parental Involvement in Scheduled Early Childhood Program Activities

Range of Parent Participation	Frequency of Participation N	%
• 0-25%	9	14%
• 26-50%	12	18%
• 51-75%	18	28%
• 76- 100%	22	34%
• No response	4	6%

Relative to the parental involvement component of the program, teachers were asked to cite any changes they would like to make for the next school year. Among the suggestions most frequently offered was that of trying to increase the level of involvement in classroom activities through the enhancement of their parent volunteer programs. A number of teachers felt that an increase in this kind of in-class volunteer work would be most beneficial.

Some teachers suggested that a concerted effort should be made during the screening process to determine the willingness, availability, and ability of parents to assist in the program as a prerequisite to the acceptance of their respective children for participation. These teachers felt that, through such an approach, parents would feel a stronger committment to be involved on an ongoing basis. More parent meetings were suggested, and in one program, a special day for fathers to visit the classroom was being planned.

Teachers' Recommendations

The final question asked of teachers during the onsite visit was, "If this program is refunded next year, what changes, if any, would you like to make?" In response to this question, teachers most frequently replied that no major changes were needed; they indicated that they were generally well pleased with the program, and that the children were benefiting.

Among those teachers who felt that changes were needed, some of their specific suggestions included the following:

- "Expand the program to offer more classes so that more children can be served."
- "Provide more money for materials and supplies, and secure these earlier in the year."

- "Provide a full-time aide and a substitute for the aide."
- "Provide funding information earlier in the year."
- "Lower the pupil/teacher ratio."
- "Use a better screening instrument; involve the teacher."
- "Have more parental involvement."
- "Provide more inservice training."
- "Provide more developmental activities for the students and less structure."
- "Provide more structured gross motor activities and allow more time for such activities."
- "Allocate more space for the early childhood class."
- "Offer all-day programs."
- "Have more specific guidelines and standards for the program."
- "Have more Chapter I involvement in the program."
- "Place more emphasis on language development."
- "Make more provisions for art and individual expression; secure a sand/water table."

Discussion

The data summarized in response to Evaluation Question 3 indicate that both principals and teachers are well pleased with the operation and impact of the Early Childhood Program. Principals reported that participants were being prepared for the regular school program and that most of the program graduates were performing on-level with their current kindergarten and first grade peers.

Both principals and teachers were generally satisfied with the level of parental involvement in the program, but in some instances, reported that more involvement would be desirable. In most programs parents participated through special activities like parties and field trips, or through attendance at meetings, workshops, and conferences.

As reported by teachers, parental involvement in one-third of the programs was at 50 percent or less. However, in almost two-thirds, such participation was observed among over half of the parents. Teachers were most interested in enhancing the classroom volunteer aspect of the parental involvement component of their local programs and in securing a greater committment from parents.

When asked to suggest changes for next year, teachers most often noted that no major changes were needed. When changes were suggested, the most frequent cited suggestion was that of program expansion so that more high-risk four-year-olds could be served.

Evaluation Question 4: What instructional techniques and methodologies were observed to be in use in ongoing early childhood programs; to what extent do these reflect the developmental philosophy inherent in early childhood education?

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Results

State level data relative to each item addressed on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale are presented in Table 8. Frequencies indicative of each numerical rating, as well as means, ranges, modes, and standard deviations are provided. Additionally, aggregate data relative to the seven categorical groupings of items are also presented.

Personal Care Routines

As illustrated in Table 8, three items within the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale addressed personal care routines relative to program participants. With respect to Item 1, greeting/departing, a mean

Table 8. Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Results*

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
Personal Care Routines							
1. Greeting/departing	No plans made. Greeting children is often neglected; departure not prepared for.		Informally understood that someone will greet and acknowledge departure.		Plans made to insure warm greeting and organized departure. Early childhood program staff member(s) has responsibility for greeting and departure of children. (Ex. Conversation on arrival; art work and clothes ready for departure).		Everything in 5 (Good) plus parents greeted as as well as children. Staff use greeting and departure as information sharing time to relate warmly to parents.

(If the observer is not present to see greeting and departure, ask the teacher: "Can you describe what happens daily when a child arrives at and leaves the center?" Look for evidence of plans made by the center to meet criteria described in 5 and 7, such as staff assignments include greeting and departure duties, expression of importance of communication with parents, use of support staff such as a driver to relate to parents, if necessary.)

N=28	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	10	36%	9	32%	5	18%	4	14%

Mean = 5.11 Range = 4 to 7 Mode = 4 STD = 1.07

*Instrument adapted from Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale by Thelma Harms and Richard M. Clifford, Teachers College Press, 1980.

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
2. Meals/snacks	Meals/snacks served on a haphazard, irregular schedule, and of questionable nutritional value.		Well-balanced meals/snacks provided on a regular schedule, but strict atmosphere, stress on conformity, meals not used as a pleasant social time or to build self-help skills (Ex. pouring milk, setting table, etc.).		Well-balanced meals/snacks provided on regular schedule. Staff member(s) sits with children and provides pleasant social environment during meals and, when possible, at snacks. Small group size permits conversation.		Everything in 5 plus time used as a learning experience, including: self-help skills, talking about children's events of the day, and aspects of foods (color, where foods come from).

(Ratings 3 and 5 are based on the social quality, while 7 includes both social and learning experience provided.)

N=33	0 0%	3 9%	13 39%	5 15%	7 21%	3 9%	2 6%
Mean = 4.00		Range = 2 to 7		Mode = 3		STD = 1.39	

3. Nap/rest	Nap/rest time or place is inappropriate for children (Ex. too early or late, rest too long or too short, irregular schedule, crowded area, noisy, poor ventilation). Little or no supervision provided.	Nap/rest is scheduled appropriately with some supervision provided. However, problems exist with supervision, atmosphere, or area used.	Nap/rest is scheduled appropriately with supervision provided. Space is adequate and conducive to resting (Ex. good ventilation, quiet, cots placed for privacy).	Everything in 5 plus children helped to relax (Ex. cuddly toy, soft music, back rubbed). Provisions made for early risers and non-nappers.		
N=28	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 7%	15 54%	10 36%	1 4%
Mean = 5.36		Range = 4 to 7		Mode = 5		STD = 0.68	

Total for Personal Care Routines (maximum = 21):

N=23 Mean = 14.61 Range = 11 to 20 STD = 2.48

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
Furnishings and Display for Children							
4. For learning activities Basic materials: tables and chairs, open shelves for storage of play materials, easel or art table.	Insufficient number of basic learning activity furnishings. Furnishings reflect academic emphasis.		Sufficient number of basic learning activity furnishings in good repair.		Basic learning activity furnishings plus sand/water table. Easel or art table used daily; sand/water table used weekly. Furnishings reflect developmental emphasis.		Full range of learning activity furnishings regularly used plus provision for appropriate independent use by children (Ex. through picture-word labeling or other guidance).
N=35	0 0%		0 0%		3 9%		18 51%		8 23%		6 17%		0 0%
Mean = 4.49			Range = 3 to 6		Mode = 4		SID = 0.89						
5. For relaxation and comfort	No cushions, rugs, or rocking chair available for children to use; no planned cozy area for children. Lack of awareness of child's need for "softness" in environment. ("Softness" means soft, comfortable places to sit or rest, rugs, and soft toys.)		No planned cozy area for children, although rug may be provided in child's play space. Very little, if any, softness available.		Planned cozy area regularly available to children (Ex. rug, cushions, child sized rocker, or adult rocker). Cozy area may be used for reading or dramatic play. Some softness available.		Planned cozy area plus "softness" available in several other areas (Ex. cushions in reading corner and doll house, several rug areas, many soft toys).
(For half-day programs opportunities for relaxation and comfort may be somewhat more limited than for full-day programs; adjust rating basis accordingly.)							
N=35	1 3%		3 9%		6 17%		7 2%		11 31%		2 6%		5 14%
Mean = 4.43			Range = 1 to 7		Mode = 5		SID = 1.58						

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
6. Room arrangement	No interest centers defined. Room inconveniently arranged (Ex. traffic patterns interfere with activities). Materials with similar use not placed together.		One or two interest centers defined, but centers not well placed in room (Ex. quiet and noisy activities near one another, water not accessible where needed). Supervision of centers difficult, or materials disorganized.		Three or more interest centers defined and conveniently equipped (Ex. water provided, shelving adequate). Quiet and noisy centers separated. Appropriate play space provided in each center (Ex. rug or table area out of flow of traffic). Easy visual supervision of centers.		Everything in 5 plus centers selected to provide a variety of learning experiences. Arrangement of centers designed to promote independent use by children (Ex. labeled open shelves, convenient drying space for art work). Additional materials organized and available to add to or change centers.

(Rate the potential of the room arrangement, even if you do not observe children using the centers.)

N=35	0	0%	1	3%	4	11%	9	26%	9	26%	6	17%	6	17%

Mean = 4.94 Range = 2 to 7 Mode = 4 and 5 STD = 1.37

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
7. Child related display	No materials displayed or inappropriate materials for age group predominate (Ex. materials designed for school-aged children or church materials).		Commerical materials or teacher made display predominate (Ex. nursery rhymes, ABC's, numbers or seasonal displays not closely related to children's current activities).		Children's work predominates. Some uniform work may be displayed (Ex. same project done by all). Teacher-made display relates closely to current activities. (Ex. charts, pictures, or photos about recent activities, projects, and trips). Many items displayed on child's eye level.		Individualized children's work predominates: variety of materials and topics. Three dimensional objects (playdough, clay, carpentry) displayed as well as flat work. Display changed often.

("Uniform work" refers to highly teacher directed products where little individual creativity is possible, for example, following a model to make caterpillars out of egg cartons, making houses or flowers out of precut pieces, finger paintings and drawings, in which children all do same subject in the same way. Since bulletin board displays may vary during holidays and with changes of projects or seasons, ask the teacher whether the items you see displayed are typical of the usual items displayed. To see if teacher made display is closely related to current activities, ask when the display was done and how it is being used.)

N=35	0 0%	0 0%	10 29%	8 23%	3 37%	4 11%	0 0%

Mean = 4.31 Range = 3 to 6 Mode = 5 STD = 1.02

Total for Furnishings and Display for Children (maximum = 28):

N=35 Mean = 18.17 Range = 11 to 25 STD = 3.49

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
Language-Reasoning Experiences							
8. Understanding of language (receptive language) Materials: Books, records, picture lotto and other picture card games, flannel board materials, etc.	Few materials present and little use of materials to help children understand language (Ex. no scheduled story time daily).		Some materials present, but these are not available on regular basis (closed cabinets), not regularly used for language development, or not developmentally appropriate.		Many developmentally-appropriate materials present for free choice and supervised use. At least one planned activity daily (Ex. reading books to children, story telling, flannel board stories, finger plays, etc.).		Everything in 5 plus teacher provides good language model throughout day (Ex. gives clear directions, uses words exactly in descriptions). Plans additional activities for children with special needs.
N=36	1 3%		1 3%		4 11%	3 8%	16 44% 8 22% 3 8%
	Mean = 4.89		Range = 1 to 7		Mode = 5		STD = 1.35

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
9. Using language (expressive language) Activities: Puppets, finger plays, singing, rhymes, answering questions, talking about experiences, interpreting pictures, child dictated stories, dramatic play.	No scheduled activities for using language (Ex. no children's planning time, talking about drawings, dictating stories, show 'n tell, etc.).		Some scheduled activities for using language (Ex. show 'n tell), but child language not encouraged throughout the day.		Many scheduled activities for using language available during free play and group times, but not planned specifically for expressive language development.		Daily plans provide a wide variety of activities for using language during free play and group times. Opportunities to develop skills in expressing thoughts are part of a language development plan based on individual needs. Teachers encourage expressive language throughout the day.
N=36	0 0%		1 3%	6 17%	4 11%	12 33%	9 25%	4 11%
	Mean = 4.94		Range = 2 to 7		Mode = 5		STD = 1.33	
10. Using learning concepts (reasoning) Materials: Sequence cards, same/different shape toys, sorting games.	No games, materials, or activities to extend and encourage reasoning (Ex. no matching, sequencing, categorizing, etc.).		Some games, materials, or activities present, but used with teacher guidance or not readily available.		Sufficient developmentally-appropriate games, materials, and activities available on a regular basis. Children use by choice with teacher available to assist in developing concepts by talking to a child and asking questions to stimulate child's reasoning.		Everything in 5 plus a plan for introducing concepts as children are ready, either individually or in groups. Teacher encourages children to reason throughout the day using actual events and experiences as a basis for development (Ex. children learn sequence by talking about their experiences in the daily routine, or recalling the sequence of a cooking project).
N=36	0 0%		1 3%	7 19%	8 22%	14 39%	3 8%	3 8%
	Mean = 4.56		Range = 2 to 7		Mode = 5		STD = 1.23	

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
11. Informal use of language	Language outside of group times primarily used by staff to control children's behavior and manage routines.		Staff sometimes talks with children in conversation, but children are asked primarily "yes/no" or short answer questions. Children's talk not encouraged.		Staff-child conversations are frequent. Language is primarily used by staff to exchange information with children and for social interaction. Children are asked "why, how, what if" questions, requiring longer and more complex answers.		Staff makes conscious effort to have an informal conversation with each child everyday. Staff verbally expands on ideas presented by children (Ex. adds information, asks questions to encourage child to talk more).

N=36	3 8%	0 0%	5 14%	7 19%	12 33%	5 14%	4 11%
Mean = 4.56		Range = 1 to 7		Mode = 5		STD = 1.59	

Total for Language-Reasoning Experiences (maximum = 28):

N=36	Mean = 18.94	Range = 6 to 27	STD = 4.86

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
Fine and Gross Motor Activities							
12. Perceptual/fine motor Materials: Beads, puzzles, Leggo and small building toys, scissors, crayons.	No developmentally appropriate fine motor/perceptual materials available for daily use.		Some developmentally-appropriate perceptual/fine motor materials available for daily use.		Variety of developmentally appropriate perceptual/fine motor materials in good repair used daily by children.		Everything in 5 plus materials rotated to maintain interest; materials organized to encourage self-help; activities planned to enhance fine motor skills.
N=34	0 0%	0 0%	4 12%	13 9%	12 35%	9 27%	6 18%
	Mean = 5.29	Range = 3 to 7		Mode = 5		STD = 1.22	
13. Supervision (fine motor activities)	No supervision provided when children play with perceptual/fine motor materials.		Supervision only to protect health and safety or stop arguments.		Child given help and encouragement when needed (Ex. to finish puzzle, to fit pegs into holes; shown how to use scissors, etc.). Teachers show appreciation of children's work.		Everything in 5 plus teacher guides children to materials on appropriate level for success. Teacher plans learning sequences to develop fine motor skills (Ex. provides children with puzzles of increasing difficulty, stringing large beads before small beads).
N=35	0 0%	0 0%	1 3%	8 23%	17 49%	6 17%	3 9%
	Mean = 5.06	Range = 3 to 7		Mode = 5		STD = 0.94	

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
14. Space for gross motor	No outdoor or indoor space specifically set aside for gross motor/ physical play.		Some space specifically set aside outdoors or indoors for gross/motor physical play.		Adequate space outdoors and some space indoors with planned safety precautions. (Ex. cushioning ground cover under climbing equipment, fenced in area, proper drainage).		Planned, adequate, safe, varied and pleasant space both outdoors and indoors (Ex. appropriate ground covers: sand, wood chips; shade in summer, sun in winter, wind break, etc.). Indoor space used in bad weather.

(For a rating of 5, space must be adequate for the size of the group using the space. Find out if small groups rotate or if the total group uses the space. Some facilities may have adequate space indoors and some space outdoors (reverse of item) and rate a 5.)

N=35	1 3%	1 3%	5 14%	6 17%	8 23%	11 31%	3 9%
Mean = 4.83		Range = 1 to 7		Mode = 6		STD = 1.46	

15. Gross motor equipment	Little gross motor equipment, in poor repair, or not age appropriate.		Some appropriate gross motor equipment but seldom in use (Ex. inaccessible, requires daily moving or set up) or little variety in equipment.		Gross motor equipment is readily available and sturdy; stimulates variety of skills (Ex. crawling, walking, balancing, climbing). Building and dramatic play equipment included in gross motor areas.		Everything in 5 plus equipment is imaginative, flexible, frequently rearranged by staff and children to maintain interest. Several different pieces of equipment on different levels of skill (Ex. swing set, tire swing, and knotted rope).
N=34	1 3%	2 6%	5 15%	5 15%	11 32%	6 18%	4 12%
Mean = 4.68		Range = 1 to 7		Mode = 5		STD = 1.53	

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
16. Scheduled time for gross motor activities	No scheduled physical activity time outdoors or indoors.		Occasional scheduled physical activity time.		Regularly scheduled physical activity time daily, both morning and afternoon.		Regularly scheduled daily physical activity times with some age appropriate planned physical activity (Ex. play with balls, bean bag games, follow the leader, obstacle course), as well as informal play time.

(A slight variation such as no play time during one morning or afternoon per week is not sufficient to lower the rating of a full day program. Part day programs need one activity period per day for a rating of 5; it could be a supervised recess period for part day programs.)

N=36	0 0%	1 3%	5 14%	11 31%	6 17%	5 14%	8 22%
Mean = 4.92		Range = 2 to 7		Mode = 4		SID = 1.48	

Total for Fine and Gross Motor Activities (maximum = 35):

N=31 Mean = 24.48 Range = 12 to 32 SID = 5.11

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
Creative Activities*							
17. Art	Few art materials available; regimented use of materials (Ex. mostly teacher directed projects). Art materials not readily available for children to use as a free choice activity.		Some materials, primarily drawing and painting, available for free choice, but major emphasis on projects that are alike and shown.		Individual expression and free choice encouraged with art materials. Very few projects that are like an example shown.		Variety of materials available for free choice, including three dimensional materials (Ex. clay, art dough). Attempt to relate art activities to other experiences.

*(The term "regimented" use of art materials refers to highly teacher directed projects, whereas "individual expression" refers to products where children determine subject matter themselves. A number of children doing paintings, each of which is different because the children have not been asked to imitate a model or assigned a subject to paint, is considered "individual expression.")

N=35	10 29%	2 6%	4 11%	7 20%	11 31%	0 0%	1 3%
Mean = 3.31		Range = 1 to 7		Mode = 5		STD = 1.76	

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
18. Music/movement	No specific provisions made for music/movement activities (Ex. no children's records or musical instruments).		Some provisions for musical experiences (Ex. phonograph or musical instruments or singing time), but musical experiences seldom available.		Planned music time for singing, musical instruments, or movement provided several times weekly.		Space and time planned for music and movement; variety of phonograph records, dance props. Music provided daily as either free choice or group activity.

(Remember, for a rating of 7, all of 5 must be present.)

N=36	0 0%	0 0%	3 8%	15 42%	11 31%	4 11%
	Mean = 5.28	Range = 3 to 7	Mode = 5		STD = 1.06	

19. Blocks	Few blocks and accessories. Not enough space to play with blocks.	No special block area set aside, but space available for block play. Blocks and accessories enough for at least two children to play at one time.	Special block area set aside out of traffic with convenient storage. Space, blocks, and accessories for three or more children at one time. Area available for at least one hour each day including some mornings and some afternoons each week. (Half-hour availability for half-day programs is acceptable.)		Special block area with suitable surface (Ex. flat rug). Variety of large and small blocks and accessories, with storage organized to encourage independent use (Ex. with pictures on shelves to show where blocks belong).	

(For a 5 or 7, the block area must be available for use by children for substantial portions of the day, either in the room or in another accessible area. The difference between a 5 and 7 is the variety of blocks and accessories, storage organized for ease of independent use, and suitable surface for building. If a long napped rug is used, it might hinder rather than help building.)

N=34	1 3%	1 3%	6 18%	12 35%	6 18%	5 15%	3 9%
	Mean = 4.41	Range = 1 to 7		Mode = 4		STD = 1.42	

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
20. Sand/water	No provision for sand or water play.		Some provision for sand or water play outdoors or indoors.		Provision for sand and water play outdoors or indoors including a variety of appropriate toys (Ex. cups, spoons, funnels, shovels, pots and pans, trucks, etc.). Used at least weekly.		Provisions for sand and water play outdoors and indoors with appropriate toys.

(The intent of this item is that children have outside and inside (if needed because of weather conditions) regular access to sand and water. To meet the indoor provision, each room does not have to have its own sand and water table, but must be able to use a sand and water table regularly if it is shared with another room. For a 7, there must be provisions for sand and water outdoors and indoors, depending on weather. Both sand and water need not be available together.)

N=32	10	31%	3	9%	6	19%	4	12%	9	28%	0	0%	0	0%
Mean = 2.97			Range = 1 to 5				Mode = 1				STD = 1.64			

21. Dramatic play	No special provisions made for dress-up or dramatic play.		Dramatic play props focused on housekeeping roles. Little or no provisions for dramatic play involving transportation, work, or adventure.		Variety of dramatic play props including transportation, work, adventure, fantasy. Space provided in the room or outside the room permitting more active play (either outdoors or in a multipurpose room or gym).		Everything in 5 plus pictures, stories, trips, used to enrich dramatic play.

(For a 5, there must be clear options for play other than housekeeping. Ask the teacher whether there are any other props that are used frequently, but are not stored in the room.)

N=34	6	18%	1	3%	10	29%	4	12%	10	29%	1	3%	2	6%
Mean = 3.65			Range = 1 to 7				Mode = 3 and 5				STD = 1.70			

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
22. Schedule	Routine care (eating, sleeping, toileting, etc.) takes up most of the day. Little planning for interesting activities either indoors or outdoors.		Schedule is either too rigid, leaving no time for individual interests, or too flexible (chaotic) with activities disrupting routines.		Schedule provides balance of structure and flexibility. Several activity periods, some indoors and some outdoors, are planned each day in addition to routine care.		Balance of structure and flexibility, with smooth transitions between activities (Ex. materials ready for next activity before current activity ends). Plans included to meet individual needs (Ex. alternative activity for children whose needs differ from group).
N=35	0 0%		0 0%		3 9%	7 20%	15 43%	10 29%	0 0%
	Mean = 4.91		Range = 3 to 6		Mode = 5		STD = 0.92		
23. Supervision (creative activities)	No supervision provided, except if problems occur.		Supervision provided but attention to children is minimal (Ex. attention divided with other tasks, several adults chatting, etc.).		Supervision provided near children. Attention mainly to safety, cleanliness, proper use of materials.		Teacher interacts with children, discusses ideas and helps with resources to enhance play. Recognition of the sensitive balance between child's need to explore independently and adult's opportunity to extend learning.
N=34	0 0%		0 0%		1 3%	1 3%	16 47%	9 27%	7 21%
	Mean = 5.59		Range = 3 to 7		Mode = 5		STD = 0.96		

Total for Creative Activities (maximum = 49):

N=32 Mean = 30.19 Range = 15 to 42 STD = 6.32

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
Social Development							
24. Free play (free choice) Child is permitted to select materials, companions, and as far as possible, manage play independently. Adult interaction is in response to child's needs.	Either little opportunity for free play or much of day spent in unsupervised free play. Inadequate toys, games, and equipment provided for children to use in free play.		Some opportunity for free play, with casual supervision provided as a safety precaution. Free play not as an educational opportunity. (Ex. teacher misses chances to help child think through solutions to conflicts with others, encourages child to talk about activity, introduces concept in relation to child's play.)		Ample and varied toys, games, and equipment provided for free play. Adult supervision provided on a regular basis. Free play scheduled several times during the day.		Ample opportunity for supervised free play outdoors and indoors with wide range of toys, games, and equipment. Supervision used as an educational interaction. New materials/experiences for free play added periodically.

(For a 7, find evidence of educational interaction between adults and children, such as, conversations, sharing of information, questioning to encourage a child to speak, helping a child think through and organize dramatic play, helping a child to think through and settle conflicts that result from free play).

N=34	0 0%	2 6%	6 18%	9 27%	9 27%	5 15%	3 9%
Mean = 4.53		Range = 2 to 7		Mode = 4 and 5		SD = 1.35	

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
25. Group time (other than sleeping and eating)	Children kept together as whole group most of the day. Few opportunities for adult to interact with one to three children while other children involved in various free choice activities.		Some free play available between group activities; however, all planned activities done as whole group (Ex. all do same art project, read story, listen to record at the same time).		Planning done for small group as well as large group activities. Whole group gatherings limited to short periods suited to age and abilities of children.		Everything in 5 plus different groupings planned to provide a change of pace throughout the One-to-one adult-child activities included. Free play and small groups predominate.

(Small group consists of teacher or aide working with 2-5 children; center work is not viewed as small group work for the purposes of this scale.)

N=34	0 0%	1 3%	2 6%	8 24%	15 44%	5 15%	3 9%
Mean = 4.88		Range = 2 to 7		Mode = 5		STD = 1.12	

26. Cultural awareness	No attempt to include ethnic and racial variety in dolls, book illustrations, or pictorial bulletin board materials. All toys and visible pictures are of one race only.		Some evidence of ethnic and racial variety in toys and pictorial materials (Ex. multi-racial or multi-cultural dolls, books or bulletin board pictures of varied countries and races).		Cultural awareness evidenced by liberal inclusion of multi-racial and non-sexist materials (Ex. dolls, illustrations in story books, and pictorial bulletin board materials).		Everything in 5 plus cultural awareness is part of curriculum through planned use of both multi-racial and non-sexist materials. (Ex. including holidays from other religions and cultures, cooking of ethnic foods introducing a variety of roles for women and men through stories and dramatic play).

(For a 5, non-sexist materials must be included as well as multi-racial materials.)

N=35	1 3%	3 9%	10 29%	1 3%	13 37%	5 14%	2 6%
Mean = 4.29		Range = 1 to 7		Mode = 5		STD = 1.53	

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
27. Tone General impression of the quality of interaction.	Staff and children seem strained, voices sound irritable and angry, children cry frequently. Physical contact used principally for control (Ex. hurrying children along).		Adults inattentive and unresponsive when children are calm and happy, but become involved only when problems occur (Ex. infrequent smiling, loud voices).		Calm but busy atmosphere. Children seem happy most of the time. Staff and children seem relaxed, voices cheerful, frequent smiling. Adults show warmth in contact (Ex. gentle holding, hugging). Mutual respect exists among adults and children.		Everything in 5 plus adults prevent problems by careful observation and skillful intervention (Ex. helping children before minor problems become serious, discussing with children ways of settling conflicts). Curriculum includes planning for development of social skills (Ex. through story books and discussion groups).

N=34	0 0%	0 0%	1 3%	5 15%	12 35%	9 26%	7 21%
	Mean = 5.47	Range = 3 to 7		Mode = 5		STD = 1.08	

Total for Social Development (maximum=28):

N=33	Mean = 19.09	Range = 9 to 27	STD = 3.79

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
Adults							
28. Provisions for parents Information sheets; Rules, approach to education and care. Newsletter Bulletin board Parent conferences Scheduled parent group meetings Parent meeting and conference space	No provisions made for parents/staff or parent/ parent information exchange, or parent involvement in program. Parents discouraged from observing or being involved in program.		Parents given minimal information and limited possibilities for involvement (Ex. information only concerning rules, fees, attendance schedule; minimal contact at arrival and departure of children). Little attempt to make parents welcome.		Parent/staff information exchanged at regular intervals (Ex. through parent conferences, newsletters, etc.). Parents made aware of approach practiced at facility (Ex. through information sheets, parent meetings, etc.). Parents welcomed to be a part of program (Ex. eat lunch with child, share a family custom with child's class).		Everything in 5 plus provision of information on parenting, health care, etc. Parents' input regularly sought in planning and evaluation of program. Parents involved in decision making roles along with staff (Ex. parent representatives on board).

(Provisions to inform and involve parents are important in all types of early childhood programs, including day care, even though parent involvement may be difficult to achieve in a full day program.)

N=32	0 0%	0 0%	2 6%	12 38%	11 34%	7 22%	0 0%

Mean = 4.72 Range = 3 to 6 Mode = 4 STD = 0.89

Total for Adults (maximum = 7):

N=32 Mean = 4.72 Range = 3 to 6 STD = 0.89

*Adapted from Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale by Harms and Clifford.

rating of 5.11 with a standard deviation of 1.07 was reported among the 28 ongoing programs for which these routines could be observed. (In several instances, greeting and/or departing occurred outside the timeframe within which Department staff were on site.) The most frequently reported rating for this item was 4 (among 36 percent), with the total range of assigned scores being 4 through 7.

The mean rating for the meals/snacks item (Item 2) was observed to be 4.00, with a standard deviation of 1.39. Among the 33 projects for which information was provided, the most frequently assigned rating was 3 (among 39 percent), with the range being from 2 through 7.

For the third item, nap/rest, a mean of 5.36 was reported, with a standard deviation of 0.68. The mode among the 28 projects was 5 (among 54 percent), with the range being 4 through 7.

Overall, for the total Personal Care Routines category, a mean of 14.61 (based on a maximum of 21) was found with a standard deviation of 2.48. The range among the 23 projects for which data relative to all three component items were available was within the 11 through 20 span of total scores.

Furnishings and Display for Children

Four items were assessed within this category of the rating scale. The mean rating among the 35 projects relative to the availability of such furnishings and displays for learning activities (Item 4) was found to be 4.49, with a standard deviation of 0.89. A mode of 4 was observed (among 51 percent of the projects); the score range was reported as 3 to 6.

With respect to such furnishings for relaxation and comfort (Item 5) a mean of 4.43 was observed among the 35 projects, with a standard deviation of 1.58. The mode within the 1 to 7 range was 5 (among 31 percent).

Among the 35 projects for which room arrangement ratings were given (Item 6), a mean of 4.94 with a standard deviation of 1.37 was reported. Most frequently assigned were ratings of both 4 and 5 relative to 26 percent each of the classrooms observed. The range of reported scores was from 2 through 7.

The mean rating with respect to the child related display item (Item 7) was 4.31 among the 35 projects for which scores were reported; the standard deviation was 1.02. Within the 3 to 6 range of reported scores, 5 was the rating most frequently assigned (among 37 percent).

Across the four items within the composite Furnishings and Display for Children category, a mean of 18.17 (based on a maximum of 28) was reported among the 35 classrooms observed. A standard deviation of 3.49 was computed. Total scores ranged from 11 through 25.

Language-Reasoning Experiences

As illustrated in Table 8, four items were addressed within this category. Among the 36 projects for which understanding of language ratings were assigned (Item 8), the reported mean was 4.89, with a standard deviation of 1.35. The mode of 5 was observed among 44 percent of the classrooms observed. Scores in this area ranged from 1 through 7.

Ratings relative to Item 9 (using language) reflected a mean of 4.94 and a standard deviation of 1.33 for the 36 projects visited. Within the 2 to 7 point range of reported scores, the rating of 5 was most frequently awarded (among 33 percent of the projects).

For Item 10 (using learning concepts) a mean of 4.56 was observed among the 36 projects; the standard deviation was reported to be 1.23. The rating

of 5 was most frequently observed (among 39 percent) within the 2 to 7 reported score range.

The mean for Item 11 (informal use of language) was 4.56. The standard deviation among the 36 classrooms observed was 1.59. The mode of 5 was recorded among 33 percent of the projects, with the assigned scores ranging from 1 through 7.

With respect to the overall Language-Reasoning Experiences category, a mean of 18.94 (maximum=28) with a standard deviation of 4.86 was reported. Total scores within this category ranged from 6 through 27.

Fine and Gross Motor Activities

As shown in Table 8, this category of the rating scale consists of five items. With respect to Item 12 (perceptual/fine motor) a mean of 5.29 was reported, with a standard deviation of 1.22. The most frequently reported score of 5 was observed among 35 percent of the projects. Assigned scores ranged from 3 through 7.

The mean score reported for the supervision (fine motor activities) item was 5.06, with a standard deviation of 0.94. Within the 3 through 7 point range of reported scores, the mode of 5 was observed relative to 49 percent of the early childhood classrooms.

For Item 14 (space for gross motor activities), a mean of 4.83 with a standard deviation of 1.46 was reported. The most frequently reported rating within the 1 through 7 point observed range was 6 (among 31 percent of the projects).

The mean rating for the gross motor equipment item (Item 15) was 4.68, with a standard deviation of 1.53. Within the reported 1 through 7 point

score range, the mode of 5 was observed with respect to 32 percent of the projects.

Among the 36 projects for which scheduled time for gross motor activities ratings were assigned (Item 16), a mean of 4.92 was observed, with a standard deviation of 1.48. The mode observed within the 2 through 7 point reported range was 4 (among 31 percent).

Overall, the mean rating across the Fine and Gross Motor Activities category was found to be 24.48 (maximum=35); the standard deviation was 5.11. The range of reported scores varied from 12 through 32 points.

Creative Activities

Seven items were addressed within the creative activities section of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale. With respect to the first such item, art, a mean of 3.31 was observed, with a standard deviation of 1.76. Scores assigned to this item ranged from 1 to 7, with 5 being the mode (among 31 percent). Noteworthy, however, is the fact that 29 percent of the classrooms received ratings of 1 in this area.

For the music/movement item (Item 18) a mean rating of 5.28 was recorded, with a standard deviation of 1.06. Assigned scores ranged from 3 to 7, with 5 being the mode.

Item 19, blocks, was assigned a mean assessment of 4.41; the standard deviation was found to be 1.42. The most frequently reported rating was 4, but scores were assigned throughout the 1 through 7 point range.

The mean rating for the sand/water item, Item 20, was the lowest observed across the entire rating scale at 2.97 with a standard deviation of 1.64. The mode of 1 was reported for 31 percent of the projects; however, 28 percent were assigned ratings of 5. The range of scores reported for

this item was 1 through 5, with no classroom receiving a score above the "good" designation.

Dramatic play, Item 21, received a mean score of 3.65 with a standard deviation of 1.70. Ratings of both 3 and 5 were most often reported (among 29 percent each). Scores within the entire 1 through 7 point range were observed.

The mean rating for the creative activities schedule item (Item 22) was found to be 4.91; the standard deviation was 0.92. Within the 3 through 6 point range of reported scores, the mode was 5 (among 43 percent of the programs).

Item 23, supervision of creative activities, was assigned a mean score of 5.59 with a standard deviation of 0.96. This item received the highest overall rating on the observation instrument. Scores ranged from 3 through 7, with the mode being 5 (among 47 percent).

Across the entire Creative Activities category, the overall mean was computed to be 30.19 (maximum=49); the standard deviation was 6.32. Reported score totals ranged from 15 through 42.

Social Development

Four items were examined within the Social Development category of the observation instrument. With respect to the first, free play, a mean of 4.53 with a standard deviation of 1.35 was observed. Within the 2 through 7 point range of reported scores, ratings of both 4 and 5 were most frequently observed (among 27 percent each).

The group time item (other than sleeping and eating), Item 25, received a mean rating of 4.88 and a standard deviation of 1.12. The mode of 5 was

observed among 44 percent of the projects, with assigned scores ranging from 2 through 7.

Item 26, cultural awareness, received a mean score of 4.29 with a standard deviation of 1.53. The mode of 5 was observed among 37 percent of the projects within the 1 through 7 point range of assigned scores.

Tone (Item 27) assessed the general impression of the observer relative to the quality of interaction between the teacher and students. The mean score reported for this item was 5.47; the standard deviation was 1.08. The most frequently reported score was 5 (among 35 percent of the classrooms), with the range being from 3 through 7.

The overall mean among the four Social Development items was 19.09 (maximum=28); the standard deviation was 3.79. Score totals ranged from 9 through 27.

Adults

The one item addressed in this category examined provisions for parents in terms of the mechanisms in place for informing and involving the parents of program participants. Among the 32 projects for which data were provided, a mean of 4.72 was found, with a standard deviation of 0.89. The mode of 4 was observed among 38 percent of the classrooms visited. Reported scores ranged from 3 through 6. Since only one item was examined within this category, the category score is identical to the item score.

Overview of Rating Scale Results

A summary of the results compiled from the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale is presented in Table 9. Beyond the item-by-item data

Table 9. Summary of Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Results by Item

ITEM	N	MEAN	RANGE	MODE	STD
I. Personal Care Routines					
1. Greeting/departing	28	5.11	4-7	4	1.07
2. Meals/snacks	33	4.00	2-7	3	1.39
3. Nap/rest	28	5.36	4-7	5	0.68
Total (Max = 21):	23	14.61	11-20	-	2.48
II. Furnishings & Display for Children					
4. For learning activities	35	4.49	3-6	4	0.89
5. For relaxation and comfort	35	4.43	1-7	5	1.58
6. Room arrangement	35	4.94	2-7	4&5	1.37
7. Child related display	35	4.31	3-6	5	1.02
Total (Max = 28):	35	18.71	11-25	-	3.49
III. Language-Reasoning Experiences					
8. Understanding of language	36	4.89	1-7	5	1.35
9. Using language (expressive)	36	4.94	2-7	5	1.33
10. Using learning concepts	36	4.56	2-7	5	1.23
11. Informal use of language	36	4.56	1-7	5	1.59
Total (Max = 28):	36	18.94	6-27	-	4.86
IV. Fine & Gross Motor Activities					
12. Perceptual/fine motor	34	5.29	3-7	5	1.22
13. Supervision (fine motor)	35	5.06	3-7	5	0.94
14. Space for gross motor	35	4.83	1-7	6	1.46
15. Gross motor equipment	34	4.68	1-7	5	1.53
16. Scheduled time for gross motor	36	4.92	2-7	4	1.48
Total (Max = 35):	31	24.48	12-32	-	5.11

Table 9. cont'd

ITEM	N	MEAN	RANGE	MODE	STD
V. Creative Activities					
17. Art	35	3.31	1-7	5	1.76
18. Music/movement	36	5.28	3-7	5	1.06
19. Blocks	34	4.41	1-7	4	1.42
20. Sand/water	32	2.97	1-5	1	1.64
21. Dramatic play	34	3.65	1-7	3&5	1.70
22. Schedule	35	4.91	3-6	5	0.92
23. Supervision (creative activities)	34	5.59	3-7	5	0.96
Total (Max = 49)	32	30.19	15-42	-	6.32
VI. Social Development					
24. Free play	34	4.53	2-7	4&5	1.35
25. Group time	34	4.88	2-7	5	1.12
26. Cultural awareness	35	4.29	1-7	5	1.53
27. Tone	34	5.47	3-7	5	1.08
Total (Max = 28)	33	19.09	9-27	-	3.79
VII. Adults					
28. Provisions for parents	32	4.72	3-6	4	0.89
Total (Max = 7)	32	4.72	3-6	-	0.89

illustrated in the table, a composite view of each of the seven major categories of the rating scale is provided. Based on the composite means, a percentage score was computed as an indication of the relative assessments given to each category.

In the Personal Care Routines category, the maximum possible overall score that could have been awarded was 21 points. The reported mean of 14.61 thus represents an assigned score that is 70 percent of the maximum. Similarly, the assigned percentage in the Furnishings and Display for Children category is 67 percent (18.71 divided by 28), while that for Language-Reasoning experiences is 68 percent (18.94 divided by 28). A rating of 70 percent of the maximum possible total was reported for Fine and Gross Motor Activities (24.48 divided by 35); that for Creative Activities was 62 percent of the possible maximum (30.19 divided by 49). The percentages for the Social Development and Adults categories are 68 (19.09 divided by 28) and 67 (4.72 divided by 7) percent, respectively.

From an examination of these data it can be seen that, in six of the seven categories, the assigned composite ratings fell within the 67 to 70 percent range. However, in the Creative Activities category, the rating was 62 percent of the possible maximum score. Thus, while six of the seven categories received consistent ratings (between 67 and 70 percent), that observed in the category of Creative Activities was somewhat lower than the rest. Such findings indicate that this area may be one deserving of attention for the 1987-88 program.

A more detailed comparison of the relative ratings awarded to each item is shown in Table 10. In this table the items are grouped into four categories in accordance with their mean score assignments.

Table 10. Cross-Tabulation of Rating Scale Items by Mean Range Category

Items by Mean Range	Actual Mean
I. Mean of 1.00 through 4.00	
1. Item 20 - Sand/water	2.97
2. Item 17 - Art	3.31
3. Item 21 - Dramatic play	3.65
4. Item 2 - Meals/snacks	4.00
II. Mean of 4.01 through 4.50	
1. Item 26 - Cultural awareness	4.29
2. Item 7 - Child related display	4.31
3. Item 19 - Blocks	4.41
4. Item 5 - Furnishings & display for relaxation and comfort	4.43
5. Item 4 - Furnishings & display for learning activities	4.49
III. Mean of 4.51 through 5.00	
1. Item 24 - Free play	4.53
2. Item 10 - Using learning concepts	4.56
3. Item 11 - Informal use of language	4.56
4. Item 15 - Gross motor equipment	4.68
5. Item 28 - Provisions for parents	4.72
6. Item 14 - Space for gross motor	4.83
7. Item 25 - Group time	4.88
8. Item 8 - Understanding of language	4.89
9. Item 22 - Creative activities schedule	4.91
10. Item 16 - Scheduled time for gross motor	4.92
11. Item 6 - Room arrangement	4.94
12. Item 9 - Using language (expressive)	4.94
IV. Means of 5.01 and above	
1. Item 13 - Supervision	5.06
2. Item 1 - Greeting/departing	5.11
3. Item 18 - Music/movement	5.28
4. Item 12 - Perceptual/fine motor	5.29
5. Item 3 - Nap/rest	5.36
6. Item 27 - Tone	5.47
7. Item 23 - Supervision (creative activities)	5.59

As illustrated, four items were given mean ratings of 4.00 or less; five items received ratings between 4.01 and 4.50. Ratings within the 4.51 through 5.00 range were reported for 12 items, whereas seven items received mean ratings in excess of 5.01.

Discussion

In analyzing the implications of the data collected through the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, it would appear that a target score must be selected around which such a discussion can revolve. For the purposes of that discussion, the rating scale score of "5," which is indicative of a "good" rating, was selected. From the viewpoint of both the evaluator and program administrator it was felt that ratings of 5 and above for each item reflect instructional techniques and methodologies consistent with the developmental philosophy of early childhood education. Conversely, ratings below 5 generally appear to be indicative of practices that are inconsistent with that philosophy.

Based on this benchmark rating, the cross-tabulations presented in Table 10 reveal that, particularly with respect to four items (sand/water, art, dramatic play, and meals/snacks), Louisiana's early childhood projects are considerably below that desired "good" level. Three of the four items received mean ratings designated as "minimal," with the fourth being assessed as midway between "minimal" and "good".

The next five items (Items 26, 7, 19, 5, and 4) were rated between 4.01 and 4.50. These are still somewhat below the "good" rating of 5. The 12 items that fell between 4.51 and 5.00 did approach the benchmark rating,

and, as such, the majority of the classrooms observed were seen to display most of the characteristics associated with the "good" designation. The seven items that received mean ratings in excess of 5 represent program techniques and methodologies consistent with the developmental philosophy advocated by early childhood educators.

From these analyses it would appear that serious attention, and consequently, concerted effort should be directed toward at least nine items found to be within the 2.97 to 4.49 scale score range of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale. These items would appear to be the weak components of Louisiana's Early Childhood Program, and until improvements can be made in these areas, the program will not be able to function to its maximum potential. More importantly, the students served by the program, will not be afforded the full range of opportunities to which they are entitled.

5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

The major findings of this final evaluation of the 1986-87 Early Childhood Development Program are summarized below with respect to the major evaluation questions addressed:

Evaluation Question 1: What were the self-reported strengths and weaknesses of the 1986-87 early childhood programs; what steps were being taken to address the identified weaknesses?

1A. The major strengths reported by ongoing programs included the following:

- Preparation for kindergarten and the regular school program
- The parental involvement component of the program
- The use of the developmental approach in early childhood education

1B. The major weaknesses reported by ongoing programs included the following:

- The lack of funds for program expansion to serve more high-risk four-year-olds
- The parental involvement component of the program
- Inadequate facilities
- Too much structure in the instructional programs being used

1C. The steps being taken to address the weaknesses identified in ongoing programs included the following:

- The initiation of lobbying efforts to secure additional monies for program expansion
- Additional parental involvement activities were planned
- Efforts were being undertaken to enhance available program facilities

1D. The major strengths reported by new programs included the following:

- Preparation for kindergarten and the regular school program
- The use of the developmental approach with its emphasis on language development

1E. The major weaknesses reported by new programs included the following:

- The lack of funds to serve all eligible high-risk four-year-olds
- The uncertainty of initial funding and the subsequent problems associated with late start-up
- The parental involvement component of the program

1F. The steps being taken to address the weaknesses identified in new programs included the following:

- Policy makers were being informed of the need for additional funds for program expansion
- Alternative funding sources were being explored
- Activities to enhance parental involvement were being developed

Evaluation Question 2: What were the characteristics of the 1986-87 early childhood programs?

2A. Teachers indicated that at least 20 different commercially-developed screening instruments were in use in the identification of high-risk four-year-olds eligible for the Early Childhood Program.

- Among the 20 instruments being used, Gesell and Brigance were most often cited.
- Effectiveness ratings given across all instruments in use indicated that half the teachers felt that such instruments were very effective.
- The results of the screening were being used for determining eligibility and planning instruction.

2B. At least 15 different commercially-developed instructional programs and a wide variety of locally-designed programs were reported to be in use in early childhood classes.

- Among the commercial programs, the Peabody Language Development Kit and the Britannica Early Childhood Program were most often cited by teachers.
- The majority of the teachers interviewed rated the instructional programs they were using as excellent.
- Central office project directors had major responsibility for the selection of instructional programs, but over half of the teachers indicated that the decision had been shared with them.
- Teacher input into locally-developed instructional programs was considerable.

2C. Teachers most often assessed student performance through the use of skills checklists and/or more formalized commercially-developed assessment instruments.

- Most of the checklists in use were designed as integral components of the commercial instructional programs and relied on informal observations of student performance on a daily basis.

- Where formal, commercially-developed assessment instruments were used, such testing generally occurred at the beginning and end of the school year.

2D. Overall class size ranged from 12 to 25 students, with 20 being the most frequently reported number.

Evaluation Question 3: What were the perceptions of program staff concerning the operation and impact of the Early Childhood Program?

3A. Principals were overwhelmingly positive concerning the value of the Early Childhood Program in providing high-risk four-year-olds with the skills necessary for kindergarten and the regular school program.

- Principals cited student gains in such areas as independence, self-confidence, self-control, socialization, language development, communication, and motor skills development.

- Former program participants currently in kindergarten and first grade were generally observed to be on level with their peers.

- Principals indicated that the parents of program participants were well pleased with the program, but that, in some instances, more parental involvement would have been desirable.

3B. Parents were most often involved in the program through assisting with special activities such as parties and field trips, or through attendance at scheduled meetings, workshops, or conferences.

- In almost two-thirds of the early childhood programs, over half of parents were actively involved, but in the other one-third, fewer than half participated.

- Among their suggestions concerning the parental involvement component of their local programs, teachers were most often interested in increasing the level of parental committment to the program; the in-class parent volunteer component was most often viewed as the vehicle for facilitating that increased involvement.

3C. Teachers were generally pleased with the early childhood program and most had no major recommendations for changes.

- Among those who did suggest changes, the need for program expansion was the change most often cited.

- Other frequently mentioned needs were earlier notification of the availability of program funding and increased parental involvement.

Evaluation Question 4: What instructional techniques and methodologies were observed to be in use in ongoing early childhood programs; to what extent do these reflect the developmental philosophy inherent in early childhood education?

4A. Examination of the composite results for each of the seven major categories of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale indicates that, statewide, Louisiana's early childhood programs rate lower in the creative activities area than in any of the other six areas examined.

- Particularly low scores were observed in art, sand/water, and dramatic play.

- Whereas overall mean scores between 67 and 70 percent of the total possible maximum score were observed in the other six areas, a mean of 62 percent of the maximum was reported for creative activities.

4B. Based on the designated scale of 1 through 7 points, four instrument items received mean ratings of 4.00 or less, five received ratings between 4.01 and 4.50, 12 were between 4.51 and 5.00, and seven were in excess of 5.01.

4C. Based on a benchmark rating of 5 (indicative of "good"), at least nine items were rated markedly below this level (2.97 through 4.49); the other 19 were within the 4.51 through 5.59 range.

- The areas of sand/water, art, dramatic play, and meals/snacks were rated at or below a mean of 4.00.

- The areas of cultural awareness, child related display, blocks, furnishings and display for relaxation and comfort, and furnishings and display for learning activities received mean ratings between 4.01 and 4.50.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were reached as a result of this study:

- Louisiana's Early Childhood Development Program is "on target" in terms of its intended goal of preparing high-risk four-year-olds for the regular school program.

  Rationale: The strengths identified among local programs included preparation for kindergarten, parental involvement, and the use of the developmental approach. Research in early childhood education has repeatedly shown that parental involvement and the use of the developmental approach to facilitate individual skills development are the critical ingredients from which good programs are made. The actual reporting of such areas as the strengths of local programs confirms both

the appropriateness and the success of Louisiana's effort to prepare targeted high-risk four-year-olds for the regular school program.

- The major weakness reported among local early childhood programs appears to be one of insufficient quantity, rather than of insufficient quality of services.

  Rationale: The program weakness most often cited by project staff was that of inadequate funding to serve all eligible high-risk four-year-olds. While the state appears committed to the philosophy of early childhood education, the level of funding presently allocated to the program is considerably below that required for reaching many of the high-risk four-year-olds who could benefit most from program participation. The current grass-roots lobbying efforts of local educators and parents directed toward securing additional program funds underscore local committment to the philosophy of early childhood education.

- The parental involvement component of the Early Childhood Program appears to be the "weak link" in many local programs.

  Rationale: Though cited as a strength in a number of local programs, the parental involvement component was repeatedly cited as a weakness in many others, particularly among new programs. Upon reviewing the data collected in this study it remains unclear as to the level of committment initially sought from parents upon program entry and as to the appropriateness of some of the activities made available for parental involvement. The observation that parents were most often involved through class parties and field trips, as opposed to their involvement in activities that are more instructionally-oriented is of some concern.

- The large number and diversity of instruments and processes currently being used across the state for screening potential Early Childhood Program participants is indicative of a lack of uniformity in one of the most critical aspects of the program: the identification of those four-year-olds who could benefit most from the receipt of program services.

  Rationale: Across the state at least 20 different screening instruments, along with many varied processes, were reported to be in use in the identification of high-risk four-year-olds. The observation that only half the early childhood teachers rated such instruments as "very effective" raises some questions as to the suitability of a number of these instruments for the determination of participant eligibility. It would appear that greater uniformity in this critical selection process would be desirable.

- The wide variety of instructional programs currently in use across the state raises some questions as to the extent to which all are of

comparable appropriateness for serving the population of high-risk four-year-olds targeted by the program.

Rationale: Among the early childhood teachers interviewed across the state, many reported using various components of more than one commercially-developed instructional program in their classes. Others indicated that the commercially-developed instructional programs they were using were too structured and often inconsistent with the developmental philosophy inherent in early childhood education. Observations such as these suggest that a detailed examination of the various instructional programs currently being used may be appropriate.

- Principals and early childhood teachers were very pleased with the operation and impact of the Early Childhood Program in addressing the needs of identified high-risk four-year-olds.

  Rationale: Principals cited the numerous gains made by both present and former program participants, and indicated that program graduates currently in kindergarten and first grade were generally performing on level with their peers. Teachers were likewise pleased with student progress and stressed the need for expanding the program to serve all eligible high-risk four-year-olds.

- The results of structured observations of all ongoing early childhood programs indicate that Louisiana's major instructional deficiency is in the area of creative activities. A number of other individual criteria were also rated somewhat below the acceptable level.

  Rationale: According to the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale results, the overall rating assigned in the Creative Activities category was the lowest of all areas examined. Three subcategories within this area (art, sand/water, and dramatic play), received particularly low ratings (2.97 through 3.65, with 5 being indicative of a rating of "good"). Additionally, six other individual items received mean ratings below the 4.50 level.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered as a result of this study, as well as all previous evaluation studies conducted by the Evaluation Section relative to the Early Childhood Program:

- Louisiana's Early Childhood Program, with its emphasis on the developmental approach and parental involvement, should be expanded in order to prepare all eligible high-risk four-year-olds for kindergarten and the regular school program.

- A strong committment to the Early Childhood Program should be sought from state and local policy makers so that the program can eventually become a permanent part of Louisiana's comprehensive educational program.

- Concurrent with the continuation of efforts directed toward securing additional state funds for the Early Childhood Program, alternative funding sources should also be explored. The present national trend of redirecting federal monies to early childhood education is one that is becoming increasingly popular as a means of providing developmentally appropriate instruction to high-risk children, and one that Louisiana educators should seriously consider.

- A concerted effort should be made to secure stronger parental committment to the program, both as a prerequisite to student participation and as an essential ingredient for facilitating the development of each child's full potential.

- A uniform procedure for the screening of potential program participants should be developed and implemented on a statewide basis to ensure that the most efficient and effective techniques are employed in this critical selection process.

- At the close of this third year of the program, a thorough review of the various instructional programs in use in early childhood classes across the state should be conducted and recommendations should be made concerning those that are most appropriate for meeting the needs of the high-risk four-year-olds targeted by the program.

- In terms of instructional techniques and methodologies, attention should be directed toward fostering the developmental approach to early childhood education, with particular attention being focused on addressing those specific areas assessed to be weak in each of the local programs observed in the conduct of the evaluation.

- Longitudinal studies of former Early Childhood Program participants should be continued to assess the full impact of the program on their subsequent school performance of these children.

- A follow-up study of the classroom observation phase of this evaluation should be conducted to assess the impact of local efforts directed toward addressing the weaknesses identified in their respective programs.

APPENDIX A

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM LEGISLATION

Act 323, 1985 Louisiana Legislature (R.S. 17:24.7)

24.7. Early childhood development projects

A. Prior to the beginning of the 1985-86 school year and for each school year thereafter, the Department of Education shall award to each city or parish school system funding for qualified projects in early childhood development as follows:

(1) One project for each school system with a total student enrollment in the previous year of nineteen thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine or less.

(2) Two projects for each school system with a total student enrollment in the previous year of at least twenty thousand but no more than thirty-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine.

(3) Three projects for each school system with a total student enrollment in the previous year of at least forty thousand but no more than fifty-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine.

(4) Four projects for each school system with a total student enrollment in the previous year of sixty thousand or more.

B. To qualify, each project shall be devised to serve children in the school system's community who will be eligible to enter public school kindergarten pursuant to R.S. 17:151.5 in the following year and who are at a high risk of being insufficiently ready for the regular school program but who have not been identified as eligible for special education services. Each project shall be submitted in writing to the department for approval and shall contain the following at a minimum:

(1) A statement of the needs the project is intended to address.

(2) A statement of anticipated results and the basis upon which such results are expected.

(3) A plan for identifying the children who can most benefit from the project by use of a screening test for readiness and social maturity.

(4) A specific outline of implemental steps.

(5) A detailed plan for staff usage.

(6) A detailed budget for expending the monies granted.

(7) A detailed explanation of and plan for evaluation of the project results.

C. Each school system awarded monies under this Section shall implement its project during the school year for which such monies were awarded and shall provide to the department a thorough written review of the project including documentation of how the money awarded under this Section was spent, its results, and the recommendations of the school system with regard to the project prior to July 1st following the school year during which the project was implemented. Each system shall return any of the money awarded pursuant to this Section that is unspent or reimburse the department for any money the expenditure of which is undocumented.

APPENDIX B

EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

LOUISIANA EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
SITE VISIT DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

SCHOOL SYSTEM:_____ PROJECT DIRECTOR:_____
SCHOOL:_____ LOCATION:_____

I. DIRECTOR

A. Program Regulations and Guidelines
1. Budgetary requirements and current status
2. Inventory of equipment, materials, and supplies
3. State and local evaluation requirements

B. Program Assessment (Ongoing Projects)
1. Your 1985-86 evaluation results cited the following as your program strengths; are there any that you feel should be added?

2. Your 1985-86 evaluation results cited the following as your program weaknesses; are there any that you feel should be added?

3. What steps have you taken to address those weaknesses; what impact have they had?

C. Program Assessment (New Projects)

1. What do you perceive to be the strengths of your program?

2. What do you perceive to be the weaknesses of your program?

3. What steps are you taking to address those weaknesses?

II. PRINCIPAL

A. All Programs

1. What has been the impact of this program on participating students?

2. How have parents responded to this program?

B. Ongoing Programs Only

1. How have previous participants fared in:

- Kindergarten

- First grade

III. TEACHER

1. Your director indicated that the instrument you used for screening potential participants was the _____. How would you rate the effectiveness of that instrument in identifying high risk four-year-olds for the program? (Mark one.)

   _____ Very effective
   _____ Effective
   _____ Ineffective
   _____ Very ineffective

2. Could I see a copy of your screening instrument and of the results of the screening process? How are you using these data?

3. How was your instructional program selected/developed, and how were needed materials and supplies determined? Who was involved in the process; in what way?

4. Our information indicates that the instructional program you are using is the _____. How would you rate the appropriateness of this program for high risk four-year-olds? (Mark one.)

   _____ Excellent _____ Adequate _____ Poor

5. How do you assess student progress; how often; with what instrument(s)?

   a. How assess -

   b. How often -

   c. Instrument(s) -

6. Is your _____ to one pupil/teacher ratio adequate? (Mark one.)

_____ Yes _____ No

If not, what ratio would be more appropriate? _____

7. How are parents involved in your program? (Do not read out list below, but check off all those mentioned.)

_____ As classroom volunteers (e.g., to read stories, prepare materials, assist individual children)
_____ To help with special activities (e.g., parties, field trips)
_____ To attend scheduled meetings/workshops
_____ To work with their children on assigned home activities
_____ Through home visits
_____ Other (What?) _____
_____ Other (What?) _____

8. Approximately what percent of the parents have been involved in at least one activity per month?_____

Are you satisfied with this level of involvement? (Check one.)

_____ Yes _____ No

What changes would you like to make in this area?

9. If this program were refunded next year, what changes, if any, would you like to make?

EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENT RATING SCALE*

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
Personal Care Routines							
1. Greeting/departing	No plans made. Greeting children is often neglected; departure not prepared for.		Informally understood that someone will greet and acknowledge departure.		Plans made to insure warm greeting and organized departure. Early childhoood program staff member(s) has responsibility for greeting and departure of children. (Ex. Conversation on arrival; art work and clothes ready for departure).		Everything in 5 (Good) plus parents greeted as well as children. Staff use greeting and departure as information sharing time to relate warmly to parents.

06 (If the observer is not present to see greeting and departure, ask the teacher: "Can you describe what happens daily when a child arrives at and leaves the center?" Look for evidence of plans made by the center to meet criteria described in 5 and 7, such as staff assignments include greeting and departure duties, expression of importance of communication with parents, use of support staff such as a driver to relate to parents, if necessary.)

2. Meals/snacks	Meals/snacks served on a haphazard, irregular schedule, and of questionable nutritional value.		Well-balanced meals/snacks provided on a regular schedule, but strict atmosphere, stress on conformity, meals not used as a pleasant social time or to build self-help skills (Ex. pouring milk, setting table, etc.).		Well-balanced meals/snacks provided on regular schedule. Staff member(s) sits with children and provides pleasant social environment during meals and, when possible, at snacks. Small group size permits conversation.		Everything in 5 plus time used as a learning experience, including: self-help skills, talking about children's events of the day, and aspects of foods (color, where foods come from).

(Ratings 3 and 5 are based on the social quality, while 7 includes both social and learning experience provided.)

*Adapted from Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale by Thelma Harms and Richard M. Clifford, Teachers College Press, 1980.

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
3. Nap/rest	Nap/rest time or place is inappropriate for children (Ex. too early or late, rest too long or too short, irregular schedule, crowded area, noisy, poor ventilation). Little or no supervision provided.		Nap/rest is scheduled appropriately with some supervision provided. However, problems exist with supervision, atmosphere, or area used.		Nap/rest is scheduled appropriately with supervision provided. Space is adequate and conducive to resting (Ex. good ventilation, quiet, cots placed for privacy).		Everything in 5 plus children helped to relax (Ex. cuddly toy, soft music, back rubbed). Provisions made for early risers and non-nappers.
Furnishings and Display for Children							
4. For learning activities Basic materials: tables and chairs, open shelves for storage of play materials, easel or art table.	Insufficient number of basic learning activity furnishings. Furnishings reflect academic emphasis.		Sufficient number of basic learning activity furnishings in good repair.		Basic learning activity furnishings plus sand/water table. Easel or art table used daily; sand/water table used weekly. Furnishings reflect developmental emphasis.		Full range of learning activity furnishings regularly used plus provision for appropriate independent use by children (Ex. through picture-word labeling or other guidance).
5. For relaxation and comfort	No cushions, rugs, or rocking chair available for children to use; no planned cozy area for children. Lack of awareness of child's need for "softness" in environment. ("Softness" means soft, comfortable places to sit or rest, rugs, and soft toys.)		No planned cozy area for children, although rug may be provided in child's play space. Very little, if any, softness available.		Planned cozy area regularly available to children (Ex. rug, cushions, child sized rocker, or adult rocker). Cozy area may be used for reading or dramatic play. Some softness available.		Planned cozy area plus "softness" available in several other areas (Ex. cushions in reading corner and doll house, several rug areas, many soft toys).

(For half-day programs opportunities for relaxation and comfort may be somewhat more limited than for full-day programs; adjust rating basis accordingly.)

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
6. Room arrangement	No interest centers defined. Room inconveniently arranged (Ex. traffic patterns interfere with activities). Materials with similar use not placed together.		One or two interest centers defined, but centers not well placed in room (Ex. quiet and noisy activities near one another, water not accessible where needed). Supervision of centers difficult, or materials disorganized.		Three or more interest centers defined and conveniently equipped (Ex. water provided, shelving adequate). Quiet and noisy centers separated. Appropriate play space provided in each center (Ex. rug or table area out of flow of traffic). Easy visual supervision of centers.		Everything in 5 plus centers selected to provide a variety of learning experiences. Arrangement of centers designed to promote independent use by children (Ex. labeled open shelves, convenient drying space for art work). Additional materials organized and available to add to or change centers.

(Rate the potential of the room arrangement, even if you do not observe children using the centers.)

7. Child related display	No materials displayed or inappropriate materials for age group predominate (Ex. materials designed for school-aged children or church materials).		Commerical materials or teacher made display predominate (Ex. nursery rhymes, ABC's, numbers or seasonal displays not closely related to children's current activities).		Children's work predominates. Some uniform work may be displayed (Ex. same project done by all). Teacher-made display relates closely to current activities. (Ex. charts, pictures, or photos about recent activities, projects, and trips). Many items displayed on child's eye level.		Individualized children's work predominates: variety of materials and topics. Three dimensional objects (playdough, clay, carpentry) displayed as well as flat work. Display changed often.

("Uniform work" refers to highly teacher directed products where little individual creativity is possible, for example, following a model to make caterpillars out of egg cartons, making houses or flowers out of precut pieces, finger paintings and drawings, in which children all do same subject in the same way. Since bulletin board displays may vary during holidays and with changes of projects or seasons, ask the teacher whether the items you see displayed are typical of the usual items displayed. To see if teacher made display is closely related to current activities, ask when the display was done and how it is being used.)

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
Language-Reasoning Experiences							
8. Understanding of language (receptive language) Materials: Books, records, picture lotto and other picture card games, flannel board materials, etc.	Few materials present and little use of materials to help children understand language (Ex. no scheduled story time daily).		Some materials present, but these are not available on regular basis (closed cabinets), not regularly used for language development, or not developmentally appropriate.		Many developmentally-appropriate materials present for free choice and supervised use. At least one planned activity daily (Ex. reading books to children, story telling, flannel board stories, finger plays, etc.).		Everything in 5 plus teacher provides good language model throughout day (Ex. gives clear directions, uses words exactly in descriptions). Plans additional activities for children with special needs.
9. Using language (expressive language) Activities: Puppets, finger plays, singing, rhymes, answering questions, talking about experiences, interpreting pictures, child dictated stories, dramatic play.	No scheduled activities for using language (Ex. no children's planning time, talking about drawings, dictating stories, show 'n tell, etc.).		Some scheduled activities for using language (Ex. show 'n tell), but child language not encouraged throughout the day.		Many scheduled activities for using language available during free play and group times, but not planned specifically for expressive language development.		Daily plans provide a wide variety of activities for using language during free play and group times. Opportunities to develop skills in expressing thoughts are part of a language development plan based on individual needs. Teachers encourage expressive language throughout the day.

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
10. Using learning concepts (reasoning) Materials: Sequence cards, same/different shape toys, sorting games.	No games, materials, or activities to extend and encourage reasoning (Ex. no matching, sequencing, categorizing, etc.).		Some games, materials, or activities present, but used with teacher guidance or not readily available.		Sufficient developmentally-appropriate games, materials, and activities available on a regular basis. Children use by choice with teacher available to assist in developing concepts by talking to a child and asking questions to stimulate child's reasoning.		Everything in 5 plus a plan for introducing concepts as children are ready, either individually or in groups. Teacher encourages children to reason throughout the day using actual events and experiences as a basis for development (Ex. children learn sequence by talking about their experiences in the daily routine, or recalling the sequence of a cooking project).
11. Informal use of language	Language outside of group times primarily used by staff to control children's behavior and manage routines.		Staff sometimes talks with children in conversation, but children are asked primarily "yes/no" or short answer questions. Children's talk not encouraged.		Staff-child conversations are frequent. Language is primarily used by staff to exchange information with children and for social interaction. Children are asked "why, how, what if" questions, requiring longer and more complex answers.		Staff makes conscious effort to have an informal conversation with each child everyday. Staff verbally expands on ideas presented by children (Ex. adds information, asks questions to encourage child to talk more).

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
Fine and Gross Motor Activities							
12. Perceptual/fine motor Materials: Beads, puzzles, Leggo and small building toys, scissors, crayons.	No developmentally appropriate fine motor/perceptual materials available for daily use.		Some developmentally-appropriate perceptual/fine motor materials available for daily use.		Variety of developmentally appropriate perceptual/fine motor materials in good repair used daily by children.		Everything in 5 plus materials rotated to maintain interest; materials organized to encourage self-help; activities planned to enhance fine motor skills.
13. Supervision (fine motor activities)	No supervision provided when children play with perceptual/fine motor materials.		Supervision only to protect health and safety or stop arguments.		Child given help and encouragement when needed (Ex. to finish puzzle, to fit pegs into holes; shown how to use scissors, etc.). Teachers show appreciation of children's work.		Everything in 5 plus teacher guides children to materials on appropriate level for success. Teacher plans learning sequences to develop fine motor skills (Ex. provides children with puzzles of increasing difficulty, stringing of large beads before small beads).
14. Space for gross motor	No outdoor or indoor space specifically set aside for gross motor/physical play.		Some space specifically set aside outdoors or indoors for gross/motor physical play.		Adequate space outdoors and some space indoors with planned safety precautions. (Ex. cushioning ground cover under climbing equipment, fenced in area, proper drainage).		Planned, adequate, safe, varied, and pleasant space both outdoors and indoors (Ex. appropriate ground covers: sand, black top, wood chips; shade in summer, sun in winter, wind break, etc.). Indoor space used in bad weather.

(For a rating of 5, space must be adequate for the size of the group using the space. Find out if small groups rotate or if the total group uses the space. Some facilities may have adequate space indoors and some space outdoors (reverse of item) and rate a 5.).

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
15. Gross motor equipment	Little gross motor equipment, in poor repair, or not age appropriate.		Some appropriate gross motor equipment but seldom in use (Ex. inaccessible, requires daily moving or set up) or little variety in equipment.		Gross motor equipment is readily available and sturdy; stimulates variety of skills (Ex. crawling, walking, balancing, climbing). Building and dramatic play equipment included in gross motor areas.		Everything in 5 plus equipment is imaginative, flexible, frequently rearranged by staff and children to maintain interest. Several different pieces of equipment on different levels of skill (Ex. swing set, tire swing, and knotted rope).
16. Scheduled time for gross motor activities	No scheduled physical activity time outdoors or indoors.		Occasional scheduled physical activity time.		Regularly scheduled physical activity time daily, both morning and afternoon.		Regularly scheduled daily physical activity times with some age appropriate planned physical activity (Ex. play with balls, bean bag games, follow the leader, obstacle course), as well as informal play time.

(A slight variation such as no play time during one morning or afternoon per week is not sufficient to lower the rating of a full day program. Part day programs need one activity period per day for a rating of 5; it could be a supervised recess period for part day programs.)

Creative Activities*

17. Art	Few art materials available; regimented use of materials (Ex. mostly teacher directed projects). Art materials not readily available for children to use as a free choice activity.		Some materials, primarily drawing and painting, available for free choice, but major emphasis on projects that are alike and shown.		Individual expression and free choice encouraged with art materials. Very few projects that are like an example shown.		Variety of materials available for free choice, including three dimensional materials (Ex. clay, art dough). Attempt to relate art activities to other experiences.

(The term "regimented" use of art materials refers to highly teacher directed projects, whereas "individual expression" refers to products where children determine subject matter themselves. A number of children doing paintings, each of which is different because the children have not been asked to imitate a model or assigned a subject to paint, is considered "individual expression.")

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
18. Music/movement	No specific provisions made for music/movement activities (Ex. no children's records or musical instruments).		Some provisions for musical experiences (Ex. phonograph or musical instruments or singing time), but musical experiences seldom available.		Planned music time for singing, musical instruments, or movement provided several times weekly.		Space and time planned for music and movement; variety of phonograph records, dance props. Music provided daily as either free choice or group activity.

(Remember, for a rating of 7, all of 5 must be present.)

19. Blocks	Few blocks and accessories. Not enough space to play with blocks.		No special block area set aside, but space available for block play. Blocks and accessories enough for at least two children to play at one time.		Special block area set aside out of traffic with convenient storage. Space, blocks, and accessories for three or more children at one time. Area available for at least one hour each day including some mornings and some afternoons each week. (Half-hour availability for half-day programs is acceptable.)		Special block area with suitable surface (Ex. flat rug). Variety of large and small blocks and accessories, with storage organized to encourage independent use (Ex. with pictures on shelves to show where blocks belong).

(For a 5 or 7, the block area must be available for use by children for substantial portions of the day, either in the room or in another accessible area. The difference between a 5 and 7 is the variety of blocks and accessories, storage organized for ease of independent use, and suitable surface for building. If a long napped rug is used, it might hinder rather than help building.)

20. Sand/water	No provision for sand or water play.		Some provision for sand or water play outdoors or indoors.		Provision for sand and water play outdoors or indoors including a variety of appropriate toys (Ex. cups, spoons, funnels, shovels, pots and pans, trucks, etc.). Used at least weekly.		Provisions for sand and water play outdoors and indoors with appropriate toys.

(The intent of this item is that children have outside and inside (if needed because of weather conditions) regular access to sand and water. To meet the indoor provision, each room does not have to have its own sand and water table, but must be able to use a sand and water table regularly if it is shared with another room. For a 7, there must be provisions for sand and water outdoors and indoors, depending on weather. Both sand and water need not be available together.).

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
21. Dramatic play	No special provisions made for dress-up or dramatic play.		Dramatic play props focused on housekeeping roles. Little or no provisions for dramatic play involving transportation, work, or adventure.		Variety of dramatic play props including transportation, work, adventure, fantasy. Space provided in the room or outside the room permitting more active play (either outdoors or in a multipurpose room or gym).		Everything in 5 plus pictures, stories, trips, used to enrich dramatic play.

(For a 5, there must be clear options for play other than housekeeping. Ask the teacher whether there are any other props that are used frequently, but are not stored in the room.).

22. Schedule	Routine care (eating, sleeping, toileting, etc.) takes up most of the day. Little planning for interesting activites either indoors or outdoors.		Schedule is either too rigid, leaving no time for individual interests, or too flexible (chaotic) with activities disrupting routines.		Schedule provides balance of structure and flexibility. Several activity periods, some indoors and some outdoors, are planned each day in addition to routine care.		Balance of structure and flexibility, with smooth transitions between activities (Ex. materials ready for next activity before current activity ends). Plans included to meet individual needs (Ex. alternative activity for children whose needs differ from group).
23. Supervision (creative activities)	No supervision provided, except if problems occur.		Supervision provided but attention to children is minimal (Ex. attention divided with other tasks, several adults chatting, etc.).		Supervision provided near children. Attention mainly to safety, cleanliness, proper use of materials.		Teacher interacts with children, discusses ideas and helps with resources to enhance play. Recognition of the sensitive balance between child's need to explore independently and adult's opportunity to extend learning.

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
Social Development							
24. Free play (free choice) Child is permitted to select materials, companions, and as far as possible, manage play independently. Adult interaction is in response to child's needs.	Either little opportunity for free play or much of day spent in unsupervised free play. Inadequate toys, games, and equipment provided for children to use in free play.		Some opportunity for free play, with casual supervision provided as a safety precaution. Free play not as an educational opportunity. (Ex. teacher misses chances to help child think through solutions to conflicts with others, encourages child to talk about activity, introduces concept in relation to child's play.)		Ample and varied toys, games, and equipment provided for free play. Adult supervision provided on a regular basis. Free play scheduled several times during the day.		Ample opportunity for supervised free play outdoors and indoors with wide range of toys, games, and equipment. Supervision used as an educational interaction. New materials/experiences for free play added periodically.

(For a 7, find evidence of educational interaction between adults and children, such as, conversations, sharing of information, questioning to encourage a child to speak, helping a child think through and organize dramatic play, helping a child to think through and settle conflicts that result from free play).

25. Group time (other than sleeping and eating)	Children kept together as whole group most of the day. Few opportunities for adult to interact with one to three children while other children involved in various free choice activities.		Some free play available between group activities; however, all planned activities done as whole group (Ex. all do same art project, read story, listen to record at the same time).		Planning done for small group as well as large group activities. Whole group gatherings limited to short periods suited to age and abilities of children.		Everything in 5 plus different groupings planned to provide a change of pace throughout the One-to-one adult-child activities included. Free play and small groups predominate.

(Small group consists of teacher or aide working with 2-5 children; center work is not viewed as small group work for the purposes of this scale.)

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
26. Cultural awareness	No attempt to include ethnic and racial variety in dolls, book illustrations, or pictorial bulletin board materials. All toys and visible pictures are of one race only.		Some evidence of ethnic and racial variety in toys and pictorial materials (Ex. multi-racial or multi-cultural dolls, books or bulletin board pictures of varied countries and races).		Cultural awareness evidenced by liberal inclusion of multi-racial and non-sexist materials (Ex. dolls, illustrations in story books, and pictorial bulletin board materials).		Everything in 5 plus cultural awareness is part of curriculum through planned use of both multi-racial and non-sexist materials. (Ex. including holidays from other religions and cultures, cooking of ethnic foods introducing a variety of roles for women and men through stories and dramatic play).

(For a 5, non-sexist materials must be included as well as multi-racial materials.)

100

27. Tone General impression of the quality of interaction.	Staff and children seem strained, voices sound irritable and angry, children cry frequently. Physical contact used principally for control (Ex. hurrying children along).		Adults inattentive and unresponsive when children are calm and happy, but become involved only when problems occur (Ex. infrequent smiling, loud voices).		Calm but busy atmosphere. Children seem happy most of the time. Staff and children seem relaxed, voices cheerful, frequent smiling. Adults show warmth in contact (Ex. gentle holding, hugging). Mutual respect exists among adults and children.		Everything in 5 plus adults prevent problems by careful observation and skillful intervention (Ex. helping children before minor problems become serious, discussing with children ways of settling conflicts). Curriculum includes planning for development of social skills (Ex. through story books and discussion groups).

Item	Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
Adults							
28. Provisions for parents Information sheets: Rules, approach to education and care. Newsletter Bulletin board Parent conferences Scheduled parent group meetings Parent meeting and conference space	No provisions made for parents/staff or parent/parent information exchange, or parent involvement in program. Parents discouraged from observing or being involved in program.		Parents given minimal information and limited possibilities for involvement (Ex. information only concerning rules, fees, attendance schedule; minimal contact at arrival and departure of children). Little attempt to make parents welcome.		Parent/staff information exchanged at regular intervals (Ex. through parent conferences, newsletters, etc.). Parents made aware of approach practiced at facility (Ex. through information sheets, parent meetings, etc.). Parents welcomed to be a part of program (Ex. eat lunch with child, share a family custom with child's class).		Everything in 5 plus provision of information on parenting, health care, etc. Parents' input regularly sought in planning and evaluation of program. Parents involved in decision making roles along with staff (Ex. parent representatives on board).

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(Provisions to inform and involve parents are important in all types of early childhood programs, including day care, even though parent involvement may be difficult to achieve in a full day program.)

*Adapted from Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale by Harms and Clifford.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENT RATING SCALE TALLY SHEET

SCHOOL SYSTEM: _____ SCHOOL: _____

PROJECT DIRECTOR: _____ LOCATION: _____

Personal Care Routines 1. Greeting/departing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	3. Nap/rest 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Total: _____	5. For relaxation and comfort 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	7. Child related display 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Total: _____	9. Using language 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. Meals/snacks 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Furnishings and Display for Children 4. For learning activities 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	6. Room arrangement 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Language-Reasoning Experiences 8. Understanding of language 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	10. Using learning concepts 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. Informal use of language 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 103 **Total:**_____	13. Supervision (fine motor activities) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	15. Gross motor equipment 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Creative Activities 17. Art 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	19. Blocks 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Fine and Gross Motor Activities **12. Perceptual/fine motor** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 159	14. Space for gross motor 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	16. Scheduled time for gross motor activities 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Total:_____	18. Music/movement 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	20. Sand/water 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 160

21. Dramatic play
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

104

23. Supervision
(creative activities)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Total:_____

25. Group time
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

27. Tone
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Total:_____

22. Schedule
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Social Development

24. Free play
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

26. Cultural awareness
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Adults

28. Provisions for parents
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Total:_____